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Elementary school teachers' lives and careers : an interview study of physical education specialists, other subject specialists, and classroom teachers.

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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' LIVES AND CAREERS: AN INTERVIEW STUDY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION SPECIALISTS, OTHER SUBJECT SPECIALISTS, AND CLASSROOM TEACHERS

A Dissertation Presented

by

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Larry, Andrew, and Rebecca, who make my own life/career interaction so important. This is written with heartfelt thanks for the joy they bring into my life each day and for the patience and support they provided throughout this project.

To Larry, who has been the best of what a partner in life could be: friend, supporter, caring critic, homemaker, and cheerleader, thank you. I love you.

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ABSTRACT

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' LIVES AND CAREERS:
AN INTERVIEW STUDY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION SPECIALISTS,
OTHER SUBJECT SPECIALISTS, AND CLASSROOM TEACHERS

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This study addressed two questions: (a) In what ways do elementary school teachers describe the interaction of their personal lives and teaching careers over time, and (b) what aspects of their job structure do elementary school teachers identify as affecting their personal-life/career interactions. Eighteen experienced elementary school teachers (a physical education specialist, a specialist from another subject area, and a classroom teacher from each of six different schools) participated in two sixty-minute interviews. To aid in reflection, participants completed two graphic assignments (a "rainbow" of life roles and a teaching timeline) prior to the initial interview. In the first session, they were asked to tell the stories of their lives and careers. During the second interview, they were asked to respond to a series of open-ended questions, designed to clarify and extend information from the first interview. Audio-tapes of the interviews were transcribed, the data were unitized, and categories were developed to reflect the content of each unit. Using the categories, themes were identified which displayed aspects of life/career interaction which were shared by all teachers, which differentiated among the three groups of teachers, or which were unique to particular groups.

The most salient personal-life/career interaction themes drawn from all teachers included: (a) work spillover, (b) limited financial resources, (c) increased understanding of children through parenting, (d) changes in teaching due to personal growth, (e) valuing time with family, and (f) job security. Themes common to all specialists included: (a) career choice based on attraction to subject matter as well as to teaching, (b) valuing the opportunities to teach all students in the school and to teach each student over the course of several years, (c) frustration with class scheduling, and (d) lack of collegial respect for their educational contributions. Physical educators were also frustrated by physical elements such as weather and facilities, as well by having to cope with the poor teaching of colleagues. Themes unique to classroom teachers included (a) pressure to produce good test scores, (b) frustration with short-lived educational reforms, and (c) the large amounts of time spent grading papers. These data offer new perspectives on elementary school teaching and provide support for specific changes in preservice education, inservice education, and elementary school structure.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

Problems in this country's educational system have received a good deal of attention from the media and legislators. The role that teachers play in the educational process has been discussed at great length. Large scale efforts to improve the quality of the workforce have been made through mandated revisions of teacher preparation programs, competency testing for teacher certification, state-wide assessment instruments, and various schemes for rewarding teacher performance such as competitive merit pay and career ladder systems. All of this has been done without attention to impact on the personal lives of teachers. Neither the public nor educational researchers have shown much interest in teachers as humans who live lives outside their functions as workers in the school.

It would be possible to argue here that this study was developed to be responsive to the important inadequacy in the knowledge base concerning teachers and teacher development and, in some measure, that explanation would be true. The more fundamental motive, however, clearly rests with my own experience as a teacher and my concerns about integrating teaching and my own life.

Of particular interest in this project were ideas about the interaction of life and career that first appeared in Gail Sheehy's best seller Passages: Predictable Crises of Adult Life (1976), Donald Super's (1980) work on life roles, and a description of common stages in the careers of teachers (Burke, Christensen, Fessler, McDonnell, & Price, 1987). This investigation was based

on the proposition that it should be possible to look at the relationship between teachers' personal lives and professional lives in the light of progress through the various stages of a life and a career.

In response to this belief, the study presented here was designed to address the following questions: (a) In what ways do elementary school teachers describe the interaction of their personal lives and teaching careers over time, and (b) what aspects of their job structure do elementary school teachers identify as affecting their life/career interactions.

The first question reflects an attempt to expand the understanding of the interaction of teachers' lives and careers, with special emphasis on teachers' estimates of the impact of these interactions over time. Available publications are restricted to the work of a few researchers who have studied the effects of the dual roles of teacher and mother (Claesson & Brice, 1989; Evetts, 1989; Katz, 1980; Shulman, 1987; Spencer, 1986). These two roles appear to have common and powerful effects on each other. Teachers believe their own parenting helps them understand children better than they had previously. They report increased patience and a greater commitment to individual learning once they have their own children. Such benefits, however, are not gained without costs. The extensive time commitments of parenting and teaching, for example, often combine to produce heavy demands on the finite energy resources of the individual. Parenting, however, is not the only role in life that might affect teaching. This study was designed to add to the body of knowledge about life/career interactions by gathering information from teachers about how additional roles both in teaching and in life affect each other. In many cases job structure helps define work related roles and so may influence teachers' life/career interactions. For the purpose of this study, job structure was defined as the combination of

organizational variables (such as total number of students taught, frequency of class meetings, time of class meetings, number of subjects taught, and age range taught) that defined the specific demands of the job and, thus, the format of the teaching experience.

Job structures vary considerably among elementary school teaching positions. Some teachers shepherd one class of 20-30 pupils all day while others see 200-300 different children each day in half-hour exchanges. The basic logistics and psychological demands of teaching the same subject to different students all day are quite different from teaching a number of subjects to the same students. Given these differences in daily experience, it is plausible that life/career interactions over time may be different for specialist and classroom teachers.

Despite the differences in these structures, most people who have investigated elementary school teachers' lives and careers (Burden, 1981; Evetts, 1989; Holifield, 1985; Kidder, 1989; Newman, 1978) have not included information about specialists. Although Spencer (1986) specifically included one elementary school and a number of high school subject specialists in her profiles of individual teachers, she did not make any comments about specialists as a group.

Information specifically about elementary physical education specialists is even harder to find. A monograph on Elementary Physical Education Specialists for the Journal of Teaching in Physical Education (Siedentop, 1989) provided some information about the elementary physical educator's job structure embedded in descriptions of model teachers. In each profile the physical education specialist, in addition to teaching large numbers of children in classes that met once or twice a week, was responsible for a number of extra-curricular activities such as safety patrol. It seemed possible

that unique attributes, such as those mentioned above, of physical education specialists' job descriptions might affect other aspects of their lives and so this study was developed. In conducting the study, I attempted to be sensitive to differences in the work experience for teachers in different situations to add a richer context to the knowledge base about the life/career interactions of elementary physical education specialists, specialists in general, and classroom teachers.

In addition to considering the specifics of the job structures experienced by different teachers, teachers in this study were asked to tell their own stories. Two case studies have been conducted in which investigators spent considerable amounts of time observing and talking with teachers at work and in their homes (Kidder, 1989; Spencer, 1986) Like those studies, this study utilized experienced teachers' accounts of their own lives and careers through a series of interviews. At this point in the process of understanding teachers' lives and careers, the place to obtain information was from teachers themselves.

Finally, this study provides a more longitudinal examination of teachers' lives and careers than has been available. Most studies of teachers' lives and careers have either looked at one particular time in a teacher's life, such as the induction years, or have used cross-sectional data from questionnaires or interviews to look at career stages. In this study I asked the participants to reflect over the entire course of their careers.

In summary, this study used interviewing of experienced elementary school teachers to obtain descriptions of (a) ways their lives and careers have interacted over time, and (b) the influences of job structure on their lives and careers. Participants included elementary classroom teachers, elementary specialists in music and art, and elementary physical education specialists. If

programs to recruit, educate, and retain good teachers are to succeed, a great deal more needs to be understood about teachers' lives and careers. This study begins to address that need.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to increase understanding of the lives and careers of elementary school teachers. In-depth interviews with elementary school teachers, (physical education specialists, other subject specialists, and classroom teachers) provided the data for analysis. Teachers were given the opportunity to tell the stories of their lives and teaching careers and to reflect on the roles they experienced in each and the interaction between different roles. A series of open-ended questions encouraged reflection on factors that influenced them and on changes that had occurred during their careers as a teachers. Through these conversations with elementary school teachers, who had different responsibilities within the school, some common themes emerged that help us better understand how lives and careers interact and what factors provide support and impediments for teachers as they develop within their profession.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for the following reasons. First, few studies have examined teachers' perspectives on their careers over time. Even fewer have addressed interactions between teaching careers and roles outside of teaching. Having teachers identify changes in their roles and responsibilities over the course of their own careers provides crucial links with cross-sectional studies of teachers' career stages to better understand how teachers perceive changes within themselves.

Second, relationships between life stages and career stages have been identified in some other professions such as accounting (Adler & Aranya, 1984), sales (Cron & Slocum, 1986), and transportation (Rabinowitz & Hall, 1981). How life stages affect teachers' careers and how teachers' careers affect their life stages have received limited attention (Huberman, 1989).

To conduct a meaningful investigation of teachers' perceptions of interactions between their life and career stages requires sensitivity to the fact that teaching situations can be quite different. No other studies have been done to date that describe the differences and similarities between classroom teachers' descriptions of their careers and specialists' descriptions of their careers. It is possible, given the difference between the daily routine of these two groups, that there are differences in their roles and expectations that are important in understanding their lives as teachers. Furthermore, just as there may be differences between classroom teachers' and specialists' experiences, there also may be differences in experiences related to the subject specialty taught. Spencer (1986) noted how the particular demands of grading composition papers placed strain on the home lives of high school English teachers. Because of my own background in physical education, I chose to study the unique experiences of physical education teachers.

Physical education teachers experience a number of unique situations. They often are physically separated from other teachers by the location of the gymnasium. Many physical education teachers estimate that the physical demands of the job will be too great as they get older and so do not intend to continue teaching physical education for their whole careers. In addition to these physical considerations, stereotypes about physical education teachers' interest in sport and athletic performance are pervasive and often lead to inappropriate expectations on the part of parents and other teachers. Because

each of these three groups (specialists in general, physical education specialists, and classroom teachers) experience specific job related structures and expectations, an increased understanding of life/career interactions of elementary school teachers has resulted from the inclusion of all three groups in this study.

Finally, a better understanding of the lives of physical education teachers, specialists, and classroom teachers provides both a valuable resource to guide the development of appropriate content for preservice and inservice teacher development programs and a basis for informing decisions governing job structures and workplace policies. Basing the development of school structure and educational policy on the needs of teachers, and individualizing support so as to match specific job structures and life/career interactions, would benefit the entire society. Improved teacher development programs enhance the attractiveness of the teaching profession to both recruits and active professionals, thereby increasing the number of competent teachers in the workforce.

Content of the Dissertation

This dissertation includes the following chapters:

Chapter 1 introduces the problem and the need for a better understanding of elementary school teachers' lives and careers. Similarities and differences among the job structures of physical education specialists, specialists (in general), and classroom teachers are discussed. Limitations and delimitations of the study are presented.

Chapter 2 sets the questions being asked within the context of related work. The work of researchers who have attempted to deal with similar issues is identified.

Chapter 3 describes the participants, interview format and procedure for data analysis, and addresses issues of credibility.

Chapter 4 reports the data, its analysis, and the themes identified. Following a general description of the six schools and the eighteen participants, individual biographical sketches describe the personal lives and careers of the participants. A description of common experiences in teaching then sets the stage for the discussion of personal life and career interactions experienced by teachers regardless of whether they were specialists or classroom teachers. Finally, themes common to specific groups, classroom teachers, all specialists, music specialists, and physical education specialists are presented separately.

Chapter 5 relates data from this study to the literature, provides interpretation and commentary on the products of the data analysis, and suggests implications of these data both for school management and for future research.

Limitations and Delimitations

There are several limitations and delimitations to this study which must be acknowledged. This study was delimited to elementary school teachers who were presently teaching in central Texas. Since the purpose of the study was to learn about life and career interactions, only teachers with at least eight years teaching experience were considered. This decision was made after completing the four pilot studies and reviewing work on teachers'

career stages. The early stages in teaching often are described in the literature as consisting of the first 3-5 years. During this time teachers are developing their skills and developing their own philosophy of teaching. After this time there is often a quieter time when they are able to reflect on their decisions rather than spend all their time preparing for lessons. Participants in the pilot studies with less than five years of teaching experience were more limited in the personal life/career interactions they could describe, because of lack of time and experience, than those with longer careers. A decision was made to use eight years' experience as a lower limit to ensure that participants were past initial survival stages of teaching and had had sufficient experience to reflect on personal life/career interactions.

In addition to the individual experience requirement, only teachers currently working at a school where there were three teachers (one in each category of physical education specialist, other specialist, and classroom teacher) were considered for participation. It is not possible to specify in detail what influence these factors had on the data obtained.

There are two significant limitations as well. First, the participant group was limited to 18 teachers, 6 from each category. Obviously, interviewing a larger number of teachers might have had benefits in terms of the range of teacher experiences represented in the data. This study was an exploratory study, however, and required reasonable boundaries in cost, time, and amount of data collected. Spencer's (1986) 3 years and three assistants made possible interviewing 50 teachers and having extended interaction with eight teachers. It also created 4,400 pages of data, a plethora that would have been overwhelming to a single investigator. This investigation resulted in a 2,000 pages of data which almost did overwhelm this single investigator.

The number of participants included had to be balanced against the number of contacts desired with each participant. From the experience gained in the earlier pilot studies, I decided that more contacts with fewer individuals would provide desirable benefits in terms of the richness of the data collected. Further, I was particularly interested in the contrasts among the different types of teachers in the elementary school setting. My pilot work indicated that this interest would be best served by interviewing different groups at the same time, rather than doing individual studies with each group. Through concurrent sampling of experience from teachers in the three identified groups, I believe I developed a much richer understanding of their similarities and differences.

The second major limitation was the use of a single technique for data, collection. With the use of the interview as the only means of collecting data I was limited to what the participant told me. There are several concerns to be considered in this situation. Single data sources make it difficult to determine the reliability of the data. Participants may not have been consciously aware of some aspects of their lives, especially in a situation where the impact of one role on other roles was of interest. In addition, participants made conscious choices about the information they were willing to share. In response to these concerns, every attempt was made in this study to make the participant feel comfortable about sharing information through assurance of anonymity, comfort of interview setting, and through the multiple-meeting format. Several special interview strategies were used to aid in the reflection process and to encourage the teachers to think about varied aspects of their experiences. The graphic displays of life and career, coupled with review and probes connecting the two interviews, aided in obtaining more complete information. Although these measures did not

eliminate the limitations identified, they were thoughtfully developed and field tested in an attempt to minimize the effects of those limitations.

CHAPTER 2

SETTING THE QUESTION

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to set the questions addressed in this study within the context of related major concepts from previous research. The introduction describes the origins of this study. Following this, four major points for consideration which provided context for this study are discussed: (a) there are significant interactions between teachers' lives and careers which are important to the understanding of both lives and careers; (b) teacher development follows identifiable stages; (c) although career stages have been described and refined by examining change over the course of time, the experiences of specific teaching subgroups have not yet been studied; and (d) life/career interactions and concepts related to teacher development provide appropriate information to be used in directing the development of inservice programs and career structures for teachers. Research related to each of these topics is discussed.

My initial interest in investigating teachers' perceptions of the interactions between their lives and careers came from reading two specific reports in the literature. The first was a journal report (Lightfoot, 1983) of a woman's reflection on how motherhood had influenced her teaching. As a mother and teacher, I identified very strongly with the woman's reflections and was amazed that another person's words could relate my feelings so accurately. The second report that caught my attention discussed the need for understanding teachers' career stages when planning inservice programs and career incentives (Burke et al., 1987). These concepts made perfect sense to me, and an investigation of the literature describing teachers' careers began.

The most powerful passages that I encountered in reading literature on teachers' careers, as illustrated by my reaction to the Lightfoot article, came from qualitative research projects where teachers were encouraged to tell their own stories. Not only were the stories themselves powerful, but the new understandings that appeared from listening, rather than seeking verification for preconceived hypotheses, were impressive. In addition, the consistency with which certain themes appeared across individuals, such as in Spencer's (1986) description of the home workloads assumed by women teachers, was at times remarkable.

The background upon which this investigation is based includes a range from theories about life-span development and career theory to studies of entry and attrition characteristics of teachers. An annotated bibliography of publications dealing with teachers' career stages and related areas (Lambdin, 1988a) and a review of the literature on teachers' career stages (Lambdin, 1988b) resulted from earlier investigation of that literature. In the following sections, summaries of the information and the impact of this knowledge on inservice and career incentives will be presented as background for this study.

Interactions of Lives and Careers

The career theory literature includes a number of descriptions of the effect of life stages and life roles on careers (Burack, 1984; Granrose, 1985; Sorcinelli & Near, 1987; Sundal-Hansen, 1985; Weinberg & Tittle, 1987). These have provided an excellent review of two perspectives on the relationship between work and life away from work. One view (Sorcinelli & Near, 1987) examined the relationship in terms of three hypothesized mechanisms for relating work to nonwork: (a) spillover (the degree to which work spills over into personal life or personal life into the work setting),

(b) compensation (the degree to which added energy or attention is placed on one setting to compensate for something lacking in the other), and (c) segmentation (the degree to which work life and home life are kept strictly separate).

An alternative perspective focused on the relative contribution of job satisfaction to overall life satisfaction. Data from the studies reviewed by Sorcinelli and Near (1987) supported a correlation between job satisfaction and life satisfaction. The relationships, however, were not simple or linear. Respondents classified in the spillover category, for example, were equally divided between those who described positive spillover and those who described stresses involved in balancing time and commitment to family. Individual mechanisms, such as these, may be more prevalant for one group of workers than another.

The changes in demographics of today's workforce, which now includes more than 50% of all women and increasing numbers of mothers with young children, has made the study of women's careers especially important. Spencer's (1986) study of women teachers has underscored the interaction between home and work as women face the dual responsibility of being in charge of both child-rearing and homemaking duties in addition to the burdens of daily teaching responsibilities.

Despite the added burdens married women typically face, Sekaran (1982) has reported that mean career salience scores (degree of importance placed on a career) for men and women were not significantly different. Planning for a dual-career family before marriage, however, was important in the career salience of women, but not men. Gehrke (1982) has pointed out that role conflicts between parenting and professional life once felt only by

women may become a problem for men as they take more active roles in the home.

Traditionally, women teachers' career commitment has been questioned because of the common exit re-entry patterns associated with child-raising. Biklen (1986) and Evetts (1989) both have pointed out that this interpretation comes from a traditional male, non-family career model and does not adequately portray the attitudes expressed by the women they interviewed. Biklen's (1986) often-quoted characterization of the way women understand alternating periods of homemaking and teaching, "I have always worked", perfectly describes the interrelationship of teaching and parenting felt by the women interviewed. Embedded within this quotation is the belief that child-rearing is a form of teaching.

The fact that moonlighting has been mentioned as characteristic of certain career stages in several models (Peterson, 1978; Sikes, 1985; Spencer, 1986) also reinforces the importance of the interaction of life and career. Different reasons for moonlighting exist. In some cases boredom with teaching encourages moonlighting while in others the need for more money to meet home and family responsibilities is the impetus (Williams, 1988).

In summary, reference to life/career interactions are found throughout the literature with the most common interactions discussed being family/work spillover. That is, family needs spill over into time at work, or work is brought home or otherwise intrudes into personal life. The teacher development literature, however, has provided additional ways to describe life/work interactions and these will be discussed in the next section.

Teacher Development

There are a number of excellent reviews of teacher development (Burden, 1986; Christensen, Burke, Fessler, & Hagstrom,1983; Cruickshank, Armaline, Reighart, Hoover, Stuck, & Traver, 1986; Feiman & Floden, 1980, 1981) which provide the basis for the following analysis. The literature on teacher development can be organized into three categories: (a) life-span development, (b) developmental theories, and (c) descriptions of commonly experienced stages in teachers' careers. The first, life-span development, is based on Donald Super's (1980) discussion of multiple life-roles and general life-stages, and the interaction of these with career stages. As indicated in the previous section, there has been a recent recognition of the need to look past the teaching experience when studying teachers' careers. This recognition supports the relevance of life-span development theory (Huberman, 1989; Sikes, 1985).

Developmental theories deal with effective adult functions in terms of ego, moral, and cognitive development. Sprinthall and Thies-Sprinthall (1983) describe relationships between the teacher's conceptual level and the use of effective teaching skills. Witherell and Erickson (1978) also have related developmental level to substantive differences in the way teachers think about teaching.

Using development in a slightly different context, Fuller (1969) stimulated interest in developmental stages of concern. These consist of identifiable stages that are characterized by areas about which teachers are most concerned. In Fuller's original work the construct of "stages of concern" consisted of first personal needs, then concern for instruction, and finally concern for student learning.

Cohen and Klink (1989) extended the stages of concern model by providing longitudinal data on the concerns of traditional undergraduate students entering teaching and older students entering teaching after other life experiences such as raising a family. Their data supported the notion that personal concerns are related to life stages. They found self concerns to be higher for traditional undergraduate students during student teaching but, by the end of five years, these concerns were comparable to the older beginning teachers. They also discovered that the two groups reported different experiences as being the most helpful in learning to teach. The traditional students all reported student teaching as being their most salient experience while the older students reported other life experiences, such as parenting, as having the most impact. This supports the notion that teachers at different life stages may benefit from different learning opportunities.

Other researchers have made use of constructs such as the now-familiar period of "learning to teach" in identifying common stages in teachers' experience. One of these, a simple three-stage model of survival, growing, and maturity, is common in the literature. More elaborately, Burke et al. (1987) have identified and described eight stages covering the full cycle of a teaching career: preservice, induction, competency building, enthusiastic and growing, career frustration, stable (and stagnant), career wind-down, and career exit. Sikes (1985) has described phases of teachers' lives based on other life experiences such as exploring adult living. Smith (1972) has identified five categories of development, such as core interpersonal skills and non-classroom roles in teaching, that occur during each career stage. Whether simple or elaborate, all stage models involve changing concerns, increasing levels of confidence, and growing mastery of basic teaching skills. Taken

together with information on conceptual levels and life roles, such findings highlight the diverse nature of the factors which affect teachers' careers.

Whatever stages one uses in the analysis, the common factor is that as teachers move through the stages of teaching they decrease involvement in some categories and increase involvement in others. The next section will describe the teachers from whom this fundamental observation was derived.

Participants

There has been a great deal of diversity in the characteristics of participants involved in research on teachers' careers. Several researchers employed stratified random samples on district, state, or national levels involving upwards of several hundred participants (Burke, et al., 1987; Holifield, 1985; Kelley, 1987; Lorton, Coffland, Brazelton, West, & Kirsner, 1979; Peace & Loyd, 1987). Other researchers have targeted particular populations. Women, and in particular mothers, have been the focus of several recent studies dealing with life and career interactions (Evetts, 1989; Spencer, 1984; Weinroth, 1977).

Several investigations with smaller sample sizes also have included a wide range of ages or experience (Burden, 1981; Regenold, 1986; Reiss, 1983; Spencer, 1984) while others have used either beginning teachers (Adams, 1982; Fuller, 1969; Gehrke, 1982) or experienced teachers (Mager, Myers, Maresca, Rupp, & Armstrong, 1986; Newman, 1978; Peterson, 1978). By far the majority of the studies, as one might expect when addressing teacher development and career stages, have looked for characteristics of, or differences between, experienced teachers and novices..

Age and experience are only two of several factors which may be used to characterize teachers. Also, subject matter specializations and level taught

clearly are important variables. Burden (1981), Evetts (1989), and Vavrus (1979) involved only elementary teachers while Blase (1985), Gehrke (1982), Hillman (1977), Huberman (1989), Regenold (1986) and Ropo (1987) involved only secondary teachers. Of thirty studies reviewed, seven used stratified sampling to create representation from selected subject areas, five involved specific subject matter areas, four simply reported the subject areas found in the sample used, and the remainder failed to mention the subject matter areas taught by participants. None of these studies, however, actually compared specialists to other groups or identified different themes for different groups of teachers.

Studies using specific subject-matter specialists all dealt with an analysis of the concerns of experienced and/or novice teachers in individual content areas. These studies in math (Ropo, 1987), art (Regenold, 1986), and physical education (Boggess, 1985; McBride, Boggess, & Griffey, 1986) all reported that the patterns of concerns for these specialists generally followed the stages of concern identified by Fuller (1969).

Although spans of grade level and years of experience were represented within as well as across studies, it is obvious that there remains much work to be done in investigating unique attributes in the lives and careers of specific sub-groups of teachers. For example, Spencer's (1986) analysis of interviews and case studies specifically noted that English teachers differed from other teachers in the amount of grading done at home. This factor alone could produce different work/career dynamics which would affect career stages, inservice needs, and career incentive designs for these teachers. Similarly, the job of an elementary subject-matter specialist has different characteristics from that of a self-contained classroom teacher. There are

different numbers of students involved, different levels of content-sophistication required, and different levels of status awarded.

It is logical for researchers in this area to have begun by looking at similarities among all teachers before moving on to investigate career specificity. A more complete understanding of teachers' careers, however, requires studies of specific sub-groups as well as comparisons among sub-groups. Information about teachers in general, as well as specific subgroups of teachers, is needed to tailor inservice programs and career incentives to job structures and specific career stage needs.

Implications for Staff Development

The basic premise that research on teachers' career stages has important implications for staff development is strongly supported in the literature (Allain, 1985; Burden, 1982; Burden & Wallace, 1983; Christensen, et al., 1983; McDonnell, Christensen, & Price, 1989; Watts, 1980). Three main concepts emerge to which staff developers should attend as they plan programs: (a) the teacher's stage of development is crucial in determining appropriate content and delivery modes, (b) professional needs are far more individual than is suggested by most models of career development, and (c) a good staff development program must attend to personal development as well as to professional development.

Stage of Development

Traditionally, the majority of staff development programs over each school year have consisted of short-term workshops, pitched mostly at the introductory level of specific topics such as classroom discipline. Beginning teachers find it difficult to translate such general information into daily

practice in their own classrooms, while more experienced teachers often resent the introductory level, desiring higher-level conceptualizations of the material. In response to problems like these, Katz (1972) and Watts (1980), have called for differentiated supervision and staff development. In general, beginning teachers (Christensen et al., 1983) and less developmentally mature teachers (Burden & Wallace, 1983) profit most from highly structured environments. Mid-career educators generally respond to programs that encourage inquiry and exploration, while addressing mid-life problems. Late-career teachers often desire non-directive programs, organized and developed by the participants (Watts, 1980).

Individualizing

Generalizations, such as those above, have only limited utility for specific teachers. Each of the authors clearly recommended that the content and delivery mode of inservice education be individualized as much as possible. Interviews with teachers have made clear that each person's history and present situation reflects a unique combination of factors (Burden, 1981; Newman, 1978; Peterson, 1978). Different teachers have different career goals, developmental levels, preferred modes of learning, levels of content-knowledge, time restraints, life roles, and responsibilities (Hange, 1982; McDonnell et al., 1989). In addition, their levels of concern can vary for each topic under consideration, their students may have significantly different characteristics, and the level of development of their teaching skills may be highly disparate. To be effective, staff development programs must allow for individualization across as many of these areas as possible.

Mentor-teacher programs, in which trained, expert teachers deal individually with novice teachers and their particular problems, are one way

to create a measure of such individualization (Allain, 1985; Watts, 1980). Training all staff developers to address multiple learning-modes and to understand and plan using tools such as Hall and Loucks' (1978) Concerns Based Adoption Model is another available strategy (McCarthy, 1982). Surveying teachers to determine the locations, times, and levels of content that are appropriate for their development should not be regarded as a luxury (Willie & Kummerow, 1978). This information is an essential element in planning programs that can make a difference in teachers' careers. Perhaps most important of all, however, is providing support for experienced teachers to develop their own professional development programs (Christensen et al., 1983). This would entail adjusting regulations to legitimize such ideas as released time for observing other teachers or doing library work (Katz, 1972). If teachers are to act as true professionals, they must be allowed to take a measure of responsibility for their own development.

Individualizing staff development also involves meeting the non-professional needs of teachers. Each teacher has different circumstances and different skills. Programs structured to address specific skills, such as financial management, may be exactly what some teachers need to move out of a state of dissatisfaction with their career (Burke et al., 1987; Christensen et al., 1983). For example, if learning better budgeting or investment strategies meant not having to moonlight at the local fast food store during the school year, a teacher's performance in the classroom and his/her personal satisfaction might both improve. Helping teachers to deal with individual non-school problems might be the most important step in eliminating negative periods in teachers' careers.

Personal Development

The last area to be considered in terms of staff development is perhaps the most important. Opportunities must be provided for personal growth. Howey (1985) has included continuing (a) understanding and discovery of self, (b) cognitive development, and (c) theoretical development as important staff development concerns. In my own experience, I have found that my own cognitive development, for example, learning more about ecology and the environment, has had a profound effect on how I conceptualize my own teaching--despite the fact that the subject matter would not be found in a physical education curriculum.

The three areas of personal development identified by Howey may contain some of the most difficult problems confronted by teachers. No matter how much teachers like working with children, one of the most frequent frustrations they express is the lack of contact with other adults. All other professionals receive daily stimulation from interactions with other adults. When deprived of such contact, self-understanding, cognitive development, and theoretical development are all limited to that which can be stimulated by companions considerably younger and less experienced than the teachers themselves. Haller's (1967) sociolinguistic study showed evidence that level of mode complexity in speech patterns recorded during interviews with teachers were significantly and inversely related to the years spent in elementary classrooms and directly to the grade level taught. That is, the greater the number of years engaged in teaching, and the younger the grade taught, the simpler the teacher's speech patterns were even when talking with adults.

There may be other influences on an adult's personal functioning that result from prolonged contact with so many people who are at very early

stages of development. Personal growth often comes from the challenge of interacting with others slightly ahead of oneself. For teachers (and particularly elementary school teachers) there are only rare opportunities within their work for this type of interaction.

In addition to teachers' apparent desires and needs for stimulation, Sprinthall and Thies-Sprinthall's (1983) review of stages of adult development as applied to teachers has provided clear evidence relating teachers' levels of development to their use of effective teaching behaviors. Further, these authors argue persuasively that it is possible to stimulate such development. Finally, Duffy and Roehler (1986) and Sparks (1983) have provided evidence that the ability to apply new information from inservice workshops is related to level of conceptual development. These three findings should make further study in this area a high priority.

In summary, findings reported in the literature confirm the notion that staff developers should be guided by the research on teachers' careers as they plan programs. Different stages of development of concerns and teaching skills are evident in most beginning, mid-career, and veteran teachers. Specific combinations of stages of development are unique to individuals and should be addressed through multiple participation options in staff development. Finally, the personal development of teachers should be viewed as an essential and legitimate component of all efforts to help teachers become fully functioning, growing professionals.

Conclusions

This review has provided a summary of literature dealing with teachers' lives and careers and the interaction between the two. Evidence was provided for the strong interaction between teachers' lives and careers. These

interactions take many forms, may be positive, negative and/or neutral in their consequences and are often related to life roles such as child-rearer, homemaker, or breadwinner. The term "teacher development" describes three different categories of literature: (a) life-span development, (b) developmental theories, and (c) descriptions of commonly-experienced stages in teachers' careers.

Although a wide range of teachers has participated in the studies related to teacher development, there is little specific information about the particular characteristics of individual subgroups of teachers' lives and careers. Writers concerned with staff development advocate that programs be designed not only to take into account the teacher's stage of development, but also that they be individualized to meet the teacher's specific needs based on personal history and present situation. Little is known, however, about demands of different job structures. Finally, opportunities for personal growth are essential, especially in the case of elementary school teachers who spend so much of their time with children at early stages of development.

These factors all combine to support the need for the study described in this dissertation. Very little is known about the particular needs of elementary school teachers. Even less is known about the needs of physical education teachers and other specialists in elementary schools. This interview study of elementary school teachers' descriptions of their lives and careers, including the interaction of the two over time, helps provide a better understanding of the needs of these teachers. Allowing these teachers to tell their own stories, rather than gathering information based on my own impressions of what was important, was the goal of this project. From their reflections about their own needs, a better understanding has been gained of those themes which appear as part of the teaching experience for all teachers.

The next chapter provides an explanation of the procedures used to gather this information.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to obtain a better understanding of the lives and careers of elementary school teachers. In particular, I was interested in examining how the different job structures of physical educators, specialists (in general), and classroom teachers related to their lives and careers. This examination was done in the context of how the accumulation of experience over time shaped teacher's lives and, more particularly, how life roles/experiences related to teaching careers, and how teaching careers affected life outside of work.

Interviews

In this study multiple, open-ended interviews were used to enable teachers to tell the stories of their lives and teaching careers. The interview procedure included a pre-interview meeting to present the nature of the project and to introduce materials to be used in the two interviews. At the initial meeting the purpose of the study was described and the participant consent form discussed and signed (see Appendix A). The initial meeting and subsequent interviews were held at a jointly agreed upon location. Every attempt was made to insure that both the participant and I were comfortable with the location and that the setting was relaxed and free from interruptions. In the majority of cases, the three participants from each school came together for this first meeting either at a local restaurant or at the school itself. Participants reported that they appreciated the support of the group setting provided for the initial meetings. Six of the participants, to meet scheduling

requests, were met individually at their homes or at a local library. All participants reported that this initial meeting provided them with the information needed to make them comfortable in the interview setting.

In order to encourage reflection about their lives and careers, the participants were given two assignments in the pre-interview meeting and asked to complete them before the first interview. The first, a graphic representation of a rainbow of personal life roles (Super, 1980) was used to initiate discussion of life roles and careers (see Appendix B). The participants were given copies of the rainbow and asked to consider roles in their lives. To complete the assignment, they used a pencil to shade with appropriate intensity each role during different times in their lives (see Appendix C).

During the pre-interview meeting the participants also were given a career timeline to complete (see Appendix D). This timeline included space for listing basic information about each teaching situation and bands similar to those on the rainbow chart. The participants were instructed to identify relevant roles and then shade in the intensity of each role during various times in their teaching careers. They brought these completed documents to the first interview.

All interviews were audio-taped. The first interview consisted of the participant's describing his or her life roles and teaching career using the shaded rainbow and timeline as a guides. Stories illustrating particular points were solicited. In all cases it was stressed that the rainbow and teaching chart were tools to help the teachers describe their own experiences in the relatively short amount of time the interview provided, and that this structure should not restrict the participant's choice of areas to describe. Several participants chose to add a band to the rainbow indicating the additional life role of church involvement.

During the second interview a short series of open-ended questions was used to direct reflection on the teacher's perceptions of his/her career. They were:

1. Tell me a little about how the first interview felt for you. Was it comfortable? Were there uncomfortable aspects? Are there areas you'd like to clarify or aspects that were confusing for you?
2. Have you changed your interpretation of any of the material from the first interview or thought of information or interpretations you'd like to add?
3. Please tell me a little more about...(area of confusion or interest from the last interview)
4. Tell me about the rewards of teaching for you.
5. What are your greatest frustrations?
6. Who/what provides you with the most support in your teaching?
7. Have you ever thought of leaving teaching or did you ever leave teaching for a period of time? Why?
8. Did you consider alternatives to teaching as a career? Why? Why not?
9. Are you glad you became a teacher?
10. How is your life different from ...classroom teachers, other specialists ...physical education specialists (as appropriate)?
11. How does teaching make your life different from the lives of your friends who aren't teachers?
12. Can you identify any specific stages you've experienced during your teaching career? Are there any particular states of mind that have recurred during different periods of your career?

Four pilot studies had been conducted to aid in developing the interview format used in this study. (See Appendices E, F, G, H) The first study (Appendix E) involved a single-interview format in which one participant was asked to describe his career in teaching. That experience provided the basis for my present interest in this topic. The second study (Appendix F) used a phenomenological interviewing approach (Seidman, 1987). Three 90-minute interviews were conducted with each of the two participants. In the first interview the participants were encouraged to tell their life stories. In the second interview they described their teaching careers. In the third interview they reflected back and attempted to draw

meaning from their experiences. This format was interesting, but it provided a great deal of extraneous information and seemed too invasive in terms of the teachers' time.

The third pilot study (Appendix G) included one 90-minute interview in which the rainbow chart and teaching timeline were used during the interview to guide three teachers' descriptions of their lives and careers. Participants reported that they found the charts useful and the time-frame acceptable. As interviewer, I felt that using the charts helped a great deal in obtaining information about lives and careers. Introducing the charts during the interview, however, was difficult since the teachers had to simultaneously reflect upon and describe their careers. The single-interview format also restricted the nature of the interaction with the participant, precluding establishment of the positive rapport developed in the longer three-interview format.

The fourth pilot study (Appendix H) involved a format similar to the one used for this dissertation. One classroom teacher and one physical educator were interviewed using a three-meeting format. Interviews lasted 45-60 minutes. An initial meeting was used to describe the project. The consent form was reviewed and signed. The participants were instructed in how to fill out the two charts and informed about the structure of the first interview which was then scheduled with each participant.

The first interview involved the participants' simply describing their lives and careers using the charts as a guide. Both participants related that they found this technique reduced their anxiety about the interview and was pleasant and helpful to them personally. The second interview was scheduled within a week of the first interview so the first interview would still be clear in the minds of the participant and the interviewer. In this

interview participants were asked to (a) describe any areas or stories that had occurred to them since the first interview, (b) clarify any descriptions or thoughts that I was unclear about after listening to the tape of the first interview, and (c) reflect on the meaning they gave to this description of their careers. Although this worked well, it became obvious that a few open-ended questions would be helpful in directing the process of reflection. These questions formed the basis for the second interview used in this study.

The format used in this study had the benefit of a somewhat extended series of engagements with the participant: initial contact, first meeting, interview I, and interview II. In response to the initial question in the second interview asking for reactions to the first interview, all participants indicated that the initial meeting and rainbow timeline assignment provided time for reflection before the first interview and reduced anxiety felt before that meeting. Participants reported that the two charts were easy to complete, provided them with a guide, did not restrict their reflections, and were interesting to them. Several comments indicated participants felt they really did share their life experiences during the first interview. One participant reported that she was surprised after the interview at the depth of the experience she had shared since she usually did not open up even to friends. Another participant indicated that she had felt tired after the interview from the emotional drain of going back through her life's experiences.

> **Jane** I thought you did a very good job. I felt myself that it had nothing to do with you. I felt very tense and it was like a stream of consciousness because the things we talked about brought a lot of other things into my mind that I didn't say to you maybe but that were things that went on in my life during these periods in my life and so of course it was tense. That may not be the word but it brought up a lot of memories of things, some good, some bad. When I left here I really felt wrung out . It was good that I went to the aerobics and did that because I really was tight. I

> can't think there's anything you really do about that unless you specifically ask some question that you're interested in and I answer and then I don't think about anything else and that's not what you want to do. . . .You can't just pull out a selected little piece that you want, you've got to bring out the whole thing. Somewhere in your psyche it's got to be there when you're talking about it. My life has not always gone along easily. I think I may have mentioned my mother died when I was a child, and straight on through there's been a lot of things that have happened. There were some intense emotions. So I mean I don't have a problem, as long as people are willing to do it. I mean it didn't hurt me any to deal with that but as I said, at the end of the conference I felt very, very tense, as if I'd been through a very emotional experience.

The second interview also provided time for summary and member checking to increase the clarity of the data.

Participants

Participants were equally divided among elementary physical education specialists, other elementary specialists (art-1, music-5), and classroom teachers. Three teachers, one from each category, were recruited from each of six schools. Having each set of teachers share the same school environment allowed some comparison of context effects across groups, as well as cross-checks of workplace perceptions within groups. Participants were teachers with at least 8 years experience. Eight years was chosen as the lower limit to insure that teachers were past the initial survival stage of teaching often described as the first 3-5 years and that they had taught long enough to experience significant personal life/career interactions.

Since the physical education teacher category had the fewest potential participants in each school (usually 1), a participant from this category was secured first. The following attributes were considered in choosing these participants: respect from the principal and fellow teachers, thoughtfulness, and willingness to talk about their lives as well as their careers. Following

this initial selection, the physical education specialist and, when possible, the principal were asked to recommend another specialist and a classroom teacher from the same school who enjoyed the respect of their colleagues, were thoughtful and reflective people, and would probably be willing to discuss their lives as well as their careers. An attempt was then made to recruit recommended teachers for the project. This procedure was repeated six times. As the study progressed, attempts were made to recruit teachers from schools with a variety of income levels and ethnic make-ups and from suburban as well as urban district schools. Three schools were approached about participating that could not be used because there was not a specialist with eight years experience in one of the categories (physical education or "other"). Included in the study were four high SES schools (< 15% on free or reduced lunch) and two low SES schools (> 70% of children on free and reduced lunch).

In developing this study, consideration was given to the question of the importance of the gender of the participants. It is obvious from the social patterns of our society that there are differences in workplace experiences for men and women. Due to the demographics of elementary school faculties, it was expected that the majority of the participants would be women. The question of whether to include or exclude available males who fit into the sampling categories was discussed at length with members of my committee. Given the demands of my sampling design, the imposition of the demand that there be a particular gender distribution among participants would so encumber the selection process as to make the study impossible. On the other hand, rejecting any males who did volunteer raised the question of why they should be excluded. I made the decision to include rather than exclude male participants who presented themselves at any of the school sites. This

decision was based on the position that this study is not intended to provide description of a representative sample, but rather a description of themes that appear in personal accounts of lives and careers of elementary school teachers. With regard to gender, taking the opportunity to be inclusive rather than exclusive should only enrich the data gathered. As a result, one male physical education teacher was included in this study.

The same issues were considered in terms of ethnicity. In attempting to obtain as rich a data source as possible concerning teachers' lives and careers, I felt it was important to be pro-active in including black and Hispanic teachers. In the schools used, the percentage of minority teachers ranged from 5% to 45%. The three minority teachers in this study included a physical education specialist, a music specialist, and a classroom teacher.

Establishing Credibility

In developing a qualitative study, it is important to employ strategies which will enable both the inquirer and the audience to believe that the findings are worthy of attention (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Five procedures were used in this study to establish credibility: peer de-briefing, negative cases, member checking, keeping a personal log, and the development of an autobiography of related experiences and personal perspectives.

Two colleagues functioned as peer de-briefers in this investigation. It was the peer de-briefer's job to act as a devil's advocate, questioning me about (a) places where my biography was getting in the way and (b) evidence for the themes which have been identified. One peer de-briefer, who currently is teaching first grade and has in the past taught both elementary physical education and physical education methods courses at the college level, provided periodic feedback on ideas and themes as they occurred. When

considering specific themes during the course of the study, I would arrange a meeting time, and this peer de-briefer would provide feedback on the clarity of my descriptions of themes as well as the extent to which my own experiences and opinions were interfering with my ability to see the data clearly.

The colleague hired to transcribe the interviews became a second peer de-briefer. She also had several years teaching experience and had worked in other occupations as well. In addition, she read my autobiography (see Appendix I) and so was conscious of my biases and experiences. Because of this and her intimate knowledge of the interviews, she was able to provide feedback on my analysis, suggesting additional areas to consider, as well as sometimes confirming and sometimes questioning my assumptions. Discussions occurred sporadically throughout the interview and analysis process. As she transcribed the interviews during the data collection segment, she provided insights and suggestions and provided feedback on any changes in the way I asked questions or responded during the interviews. This peer de-briefer continued to provide feedback during data analysis. After I grouped data together and identified interesting concepts or themes, I presented them to this peer de-briefer. She again provided both confirmations and questions based on her knowledge of the tapes. The role of the peer de-briefer aided in establishing the dependability of the study through the interactive mode described above and the confirmability of the study through her knowledge of the interview transcripts.

In the course of developing common themes, negative cases, in which teachers reported experiences or beliefs that were in sharp contrast with the other participants (particularly when this occurred among teachers in the same school) or with regularities which already had been identified within

the data, were pursued. Such negative cases were one source for requests for clarification of material during the second interview. This technique was particularly helpful in attempting to identify common themes for the separate groups of physical educators, specialists, and classroom teachers. Further probing, follow-up, and clarification of negative cases resulted in the revision of themes or the addition of new categories to accommodate the diversity of experience among the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Given the multiple interview format, it was possible to use a limited form of what Lincoln and Guba call member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to help insure trustworthiness in the understanding of the participants' experiences. Between the first and second interviews, I listened to the tape and reviewed my notes. During the second interview, any areas which were unclear in the first interview were reviewed with the participant. In addition, the summary questions were used to confirm impressions formed on the basis of descriptions provided in the first interview. Probes were used to insure appropriate interpretation of earlier remarks.

A three-part personal log was kept during the period of interview and data analysis. The log recorded: (a) my personal feelings and reactions to both the interview process and the information generated, (b) emerging themes and ideas to pursue further, and (c) problems which had arisen and decisions made. In addition to my own reflective use during data analysis, the log was used during meetings with my peer de-briefers to help identify areas to re-think or new directions to consider.

In order to identify and acknowledge potent experiences in my own past, as well as belief structures in my thinking, a careful autobiography with an inventory of beliefs related to the study was prepared (see Appendix J). In it I tried to record preconceived notions I have about the interaction of

teachers' lives and careers as well as my experiences and beliefs about the job of a specialist and, in particular, a physical education specialist in an elementary school. This analysis of my own experiences helped, for example, to sensitize me to my strong beliefs about the place of work in one's life and helped the peer de-briefer watch for evidence that my biases were intruding into data collection or analysis in unnoticed and inappropriate ways. It also will aid future readers of this study to make their own decisions as to the credibility of interpretations. In the end, the readers will have to decide for themselves if the material presented appears credible. I have provided my participants' own words as often as seemed appropriate to both enrich the description of the data and allow others to make their own judgements about my analysis.

Working with the Data

At the completion of the last set of interviews, the data set consisted of transcripts of 36 interviews (two with each participant) and two graphic representations of life and career roles for each participant. Six classroom teachers, six physical education specialists and six specialists from other subject areas made up the participant pool. This data set had several attractive attributes. First, it included two interviews with each individual separated by about a week. Given the active recruitment of thoughtful participants, the assignments completed before the first interview, and the encouragement given to describe interactions among various aspects of their lives, the data were indeed rich in personal reflection.

The second attractive attribute of the data set was the variety of common bonds shared by the various participants. Sets of three shared a common school environment. Cutting across this common bond were

groups that shared similar teaching situations (classroom, gym). Twelve participants shared the common role of specialist, teaching most if not all of the children in the school on a rotating schedule. The number of categories of participant groups as well as the strength of the commonality of the teaching situations experienced by specialists, physical education specialists, and classroom teachers was a real advantage in analyzing this data set.

These various subgroup attributes allowed me to consider the question "In what ways do elementary school teachers describe the interaction of their personal lives and teaching careers over time?" in light of the responses of specific subgroups as well as for all the participants as a group. The delineation of subgroups was particularly valuable when considering the second research question "What aspects of their job structure do elementary school teachers identify as affecting their life/career interactions?" Considering these research questions in relation to the various subgroup divisions of the participants provided an overall strategy for initiating data analysis and the search for compelling themes.

The interview tapes were fully transcribed with pseudonyms chosen by the participants replacing all names. Each page of the transcript was coded using a system which identified the participant by pseudonym, school, teaching area, and years of experience.

The data were analyzed using Lincoln & Guba's (1985) suggestions for unitizing and categorizing. As copies of the transcripts became available on computer disks, each first interview was carefully re-read. Interview statements were divided into units, each describing a unique thought. As units were constructed, a category name which described the topic being discussed was identified. The units were then transported to a computer file titled with the appropriate category descriptor (i.e. beginning teaching

experience, career choice, parent/teacher role interaction, etc.) Statements were copied into more than one category file if this appeared appropriate. New files were developed whenever material appeared that seemed to warrant a new category name. When new categories were identified, previously coded interviews were again reviewed for material appropriate to the new category. Participant codes were copied with each statement so passages could be properly identified.

Responses to individual questions from the second interview were gathered together into computer files labeled by the question as well as unitized and copied into category files as deemed appropriate. In each file the classroom teachers', specialists' and physical education specialists' materials were gathered in blocks for easier analysis. Working on category development continued until all data were included. Comments which described the impact of early experiences on later experiences, the impact of life roles and life stages on career, and the impact of teaching roles and career stages on personal life were given extra consideration. Each category file was reviewed to insure that all entries were appropriately filed. When all interviews had been unitized and categorized, each category- and question-summary file was printed (28 files from interview I, 26 files from interview II).

The printed files were then read and each unitized statement described by a phrase in the side margin. Particularly descriptive or potent statements were highlighted for later use in presenting the data. At the beginning of each printed file, a list was compiled of general themes, negative cases, key comments, and group commonalities. These lists were then shared with the peer de-briefer and feedback was solicited.

In addition to the topical files summary of the data, a chart was created indicating the experiences of each teacher in relation to topics or experiences of interest. The physical education specialists, specialists not in physical education, and classroom teachers were clustered on this chart for ease of analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

At this point, the participant codes identifying teaching areas were reviewed within each category file to determine if there are differences among the three groups of teachers that appeared to be significant. Because so many of the themes about personal life and career interaction that emerged were common to all, or almost all, participants, a general description of experiences common to all teachers was developed. In addition, a collection of the experiences and themes that seemed common to the teachers in each group and different from the other groups was made for each group of teachers (classroom teacher, specialists in general, music specialists, and physical education specialists). Each of the themes identified in the data was reviewed for the meaning it had in relation to teachers' personal lives and to their careers. The richness of the participants' stories and the complexity of their lives led to the creation of short biographies of each participant as another form of data presentation. These biographies are intended to help the reader know more about the participants' personal lives and careers as background for considering the rest of the data analysis in this study. These biographies along with the descriptions of experiences common to all types of teachers and those common to each subgroup are presented in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTING THE DATA

Background Information

This chapter will report the data collected in this study. It consists of six major sections. The first section provides background information including a description of the schools which were homes to the six sets of teachers interviewed in this study and a general description of the eighteen teachers involved. This is followed by five sections describing the teachers' lives and careers. First, the participants are introduced through a series of short biographies. Next, common factors related to career choice and teaching experience are presented. Personal life/career interactions experienced by almost all teachers regardless of group are summarized, followed by separate sections reporting unique themes or emphases common to each group: classroom teachers, specialists in general, music specialists and physical education specialists.

Description of Schools

Participants in this study included a physical education specialist, a specialist not in physical education, and a classroom teacher from each of six different schools. This distribution allowed attention to the unique characteristics of each of these three positions within a school and also allowed attention to the career/life interactions steming from these characteristics. Recruiting three participants from each school provided confirmability for the description of school life provided by each participant. In almost all cases, general descriptions of the schools were similar for all three participants. In one case, the classroom teacher described tension and

division in the school that was not mentioned by the other two specialists from that school. As will be described in the section presenting common themes of the each group, specialists' and classroom teachers' view of the school differed in several distinct ways.

Of the six schools, three were part of one urban district. One of these had a predominantly high-SES (14% on free or reduced lunch), Anglo (90%) population. The other two were lower-SES (72% & 98% on free and reduced lunch, respectively) and had larger minority representations (Hispanic 40%, Black 8%, Anglo 52%, and Hispanic 69%, Black 14%, and Anglo 17%). Two schools were from a suburban district and were generally upper-middle class (<15% free and reduced lunch) and about 90% Anglo. The final school was an urban private school (Grades 1-8) which had a high-SES population and was predominantly Anglo.

Although the economic level and racial (and ethnic) composition of the student population in the different schools varied, the six home schools for the participants in this study shared a number of similarities. All were described by participants as good schools. Administrators were all considered generally competent, and in several cases exceptional. They ranged in size from 400 to 800 students. The private school was the smallest. The urban schools with the lowest and highest average parental income levels each had about 800 students, while the remaining four schools each had approximately 600 students.

Both urban and suburban schools had well-kept physical plants, although all but the private school had significant numbers of students housed in portable buildings. One of the urban schools was designed with open classrooms while the rest of the schools contained traditional

individual classroom designs. Every classroom teacher and music or art specialist had their own classroom.

Physical education facilities were more variable. The private school had a large well-equipped gymnasium and used a small field and two tennis courts available in a public park across the street. The other three urban schools had small gymnasiums and large field spaces around the schools. In two cases, the gyms were divided from the cafeteria by a movable partition (which made them quite noisy). The suburban schools were newer in construction, but were not substantially different in their physical plants from the urban schools. One had a gymnasium, the other did not. In the school without the gymnasium, physical education was taught in the cafeteria, outside, and in a large, low ceilinged room in a portable building. Five of the schools had more than one physical education specialist. Two had more than one music specialist.

Description of Participants

Participants in this study ranged in age from 36 to 60 with the average age being about 50. The three groups of teachers had similar terms of experience (See Table 1). In addition to their current positions, four of the specialists had at some time taught as self-contained classroom teachers and two of the classroom teachers had taught as academic specialists.

Similarities among the three groups were also found in two additional areas: relationship status and ethnicity. Just over half of each group were married (See Table 2). All but the single teacher had children. Each group included five Anglo teachers and one minority teacher (See Table 3). The ethnicity of the teachers in the schools generally matched the student ethnic makeup. In the school with the highest percentage of minorities in the

student body, 54% of the teachers were minority also. Two of the minority teachers interviewed in this study were from this school. The percentage of minority teachers in the rest of the schools ranged from five to twenty.

Table 1

Years of Teaching Experience of Participants

	Years of Experience		
	10-14	15-19	20+
Physical education specialists	2	2	2
Specialists not in physical education	3	1	2
Classroom teachers	3	2	1
Total	8	5	5

Table 2

Relationship Status of Participants

	Married	Divorced	Single
Physical education specialists	4	2	0
Specialists not in physical education	3	2	1
Classroom teachers	4	2	0
Total	11	6	1

Table 3

Ethnicity of Participants

	Anglo	Black	Hispanic
Physical education specialists	5	0	1
Specialists not in physical education	5	0	1
Classroom teachers	5	1	0
Total	15	1	2

As anticipated, the elementary schools had few male teachers. The six schools had between zero and five male teachers with a total of ten. Three of the ten males were specialists. One male physical education specialist was included in this study.

There was no attempt to achieve equal representation for all of the variables above, but rather to recruit teachers with at least eight years experience and to include males and minority teachers when possible. The participants were not chosen to be representative of the teachers in the schools, but to assure participants who would offer the widest possible range of experiences. The similarities described above among the teachers in the three groups are reflected in the many similarities found in these teachers' lives.

Introducing the Participants

Before presenting any analysis of the data, I would like to introduce the participants in this study. While each participant had a unique story to tell, overall the participants in this study shared many commonalities. The most important awareness I gained, in doing this study, was an understanding of the complexity of experiences that are a part of each individual's background. Meeting people on the street, or teachers in the hallway, we have little understanding of all the interactions and experiences in their lives that have come to make up who they are.

Bea (physical education)

Bea is an Hispanic female about 50 years of age. She teaches in a predominantly Hispanic, lower-SES elementary school. Bea grew up in a very poor family. Her father believed strongly in education and when his

children were young, he fought the local authorities to allow Hispanic children to continue with their schooling through high school. At that time, the Hispanic school only went to sixth grade. Bea was attached to him, although he was an alcoholic and often was not around during her childhood.

From an early age Bea enjoyed teaching. In third grade she often took charge of her little sister's class when the teacher was not there. Bea did not think that college was even a possibility until a high school counselor suggested that she apply for scholarships. She attended college intending to major in dance, but found that dance majors were required to have had early training. So, she chose physical education as her major because of her love of movement.

Bea married during college and missed doing her student teaching because she was pregnant. She wanted to stay home and take care of her new baby. However, she applied for jobs and found that, in addition to teaching, coaching several sports was usually required. She finally accepted a junior high position, where she would only have to coach one sport, so she could spend more time at home with her child. At this school she fought the male coaches over sex discrimination in the use of facilities and equipment, even though it meant complaining to the male principal, who was an ex-coach.

Bea's husband was a political organizer and together they worked on social justice causes locally and nationally. After a couple of years, she became overwhelmed trying to teach and also be active in all her husband's political causes. Though she was pregnant with their second child, they separated for a short time. They reconciled and spent time in Washington D.C. working on peace and justice issues. During this period, Bea stayed home with their three young children. In addition to her own children, Bea adopted a child, whose

drug-addicted mother was no longer able to care for her, and found homes for her brothers and sisters among her relatives. Her marriage was still a struggle and finally, tired of her husband's extra-marital affairs, Bea packed his bags and asked him to leave.

Bea rarely received child support, and she and her children lived in poverty, made worse by the humiliation they suffered dealing with the welfare system. During this time Bea found strength she didn't know she had. "I learned many, many lessons. I learned that I wasn't weak and that I could do whatever I needed to do to take care of the kids." Bea worked for an after-school day care center until all her children were in school and then began a new career teaching elementary school physical education. Life was still difficult. "I had my utilities cut off at times. We'd use candles, and I'd tell the girls to 'practice how [you will] eat when the president comes over'."

Bea was offered a better-paying job on a federal education grant, but declined the opportunity because the job would require travel and a lot more time away from her children. Finding the personal problems of students at the school where she was teaching overwhelming, she transferred to a higher-SES elementary school where she thought the the students would have fewer problems. Her children transferred with her.

Bea's trials were not over, however. When her second oldest child was a teenager, there were many struggles within the family. Upon learning that this child had an eating disorder, Bea spent a great deal of time and effort learning about this problem and getting help for her daughter and family. Bea realized that, although she had been meeting her children's physical needs, she had not been meeting their emotional needs. This child, in particular, was still devastated by issues related to the divorce. Through this experience with her daughter's eating disorder and through a personal

support group she attended, Bea's philosophy of teaching changed. She has come to focus her teaching on children's emotional well-being. She now, more than ever, recognizes the tremendous complexity in the backgrounds and lives of her young students and tries to be sensitive to their personal needs in every aspect of her teaching.

Billye Jo (physical education)

Billye Jo is a white female about 60 years old who has been teaching for over 36 years. She began teaching physical education on a principal's challenge to do better than an existing program. She is well respected by physical education teachers in the district and is considered a master of organization and teaching progressions. She loves to see children learn new skills. Billye Jo spends a lot of her energy and attention teaching her students to take responsibility for their actions and encouraging personal improvement.

Billye Jo enjoyed and did well in school. It was at her mother's direction that she became a teacher. "We lived near a teachers' college and it would be well to take advantage of that." She would have liked to study chemistry, but that major was not offered in her college. Instead, she majored in elementary education and minored in physical education. She chose physical education as a minor after pleasurable experiences in several college physical education courses. Billye Jo still thinks that she also could have been happy in a career as a research chemist.

One of the traumas in Billye Jo's life resulted from her decision to marry against her mother's wishes. Her mother objected that her fiance was a non-Catholic and that they had only known each other for six months. Billye Jo found her mother's attitude about religion hypocritical since her father

also was not a Catholic and her family didn't even attend church regularly. Nevertheless, her mother refused to attend the wedding and for years afterward their relationship was strained. "When her first grandchild was born five years later, I thought she would have been over it, but she did not even indicate that she wanted to come and see him." Since that time, thirty years ago, Billye Jo has tried to re-establish the relationship. She feels she and her mother have both mellowed and the relationship is better.

Billye Jo stayed home one year when each of her children was born before returning to teaching. Her first, a son, was relatively easy to raise. However, her daughter (ten years younger) provided more challenge. One of the lessons Billye Jo learned from her parenting was that all children are different and need to be treated as individuals. She found that, without noticing it, she sometimes talked to her children as if they were students in her classes, and they objected to this treatment. Also, after having repeated directions to hundreds of students at school each day, she was sometimes frustrated by having to do the same thing at home with her own children. Often, when she got home, she felt the need for a little time alone, just for herself.

Teaching took a lot of time away from her family. Billye Jo estimates she spends an average of two hours a night on school-related work, in addition to ten-hour school days. Her husband always has been very supportive of her work, helping her make equipment for the gym and volunteering at special events. Billye Jo went back to school for a master's degree when she was 46 and realized again how much she loved learning. She wondered why she had put it off for so long, until she thought about the cost involved and the time it required away from her children. Billye Jo and

her family do a lot of activities together including bowling, water-skiing, and camping.

Billye Jo believes that over the years she has learned more productive, alternative ways to get things done. She is willing to go around obstacles quietly rather than going through them.

Meg (physical education)

Meg is a white female in her mid-forties. She loves teaching physical skills and believes that the mission of physical education is to teach children skills and activities that will attract them to physically active lifestyles. She says of her teaching, "I feel like that's one of the really positive things that I do, [help children] feel successful and self-confident."

Meg, who always did well in school, grew up in a middle-class family that valued education. She was the first in her family to attend college. Her father felt she didn't need a college education but, through her mother's encouragement, she was allowed to go. Meg considered teaching math, but found herself uninterested and unskilled in the required math courses and so chose her other love, physical education. She had always enjoyed being active as a child, taking tennis lessons and playing various sports with friends.

After college Meg married and taught in an excellent high school physical education program. She loved her work, had good colleagues, and learned to be a very successful teacher. In Illinois at that time, regular observations and assessments were made of teachers. Years later Meg was surprised at the controversy and stress caused when teacher assessment was initiated in Texas.

Meg reluctantly left this wonderful job to move with her husband to another state so he could attend graduate school. She had difficulty finding a job and ended up working as a checker in a grocery store. When her husband finished school, Meg was able to return to her treasured job in Illinois, but shortly thereafter was required to give it up once again because she became pregnant. Meg still feels that she gave up a lot in her career when she left this first job teaching physical education to be a wife and mother.

Meg stayed home with her children for the next 10 years. After a few years her husband grew tired of teaching and they bought a small farm. Farming was hard, uncertain work although it did allow them to spend their days together as a family. To help with expenses, Meg took a part-time job teaching physical education in a private elementary school. Several years later, tired of the farming struggle, they sold the farm and moved south looking for warmth and good weather. Meg substituted and stayed home with the children while her husband took a job as a science teacher. When her youngest child was four, Meg began looking for a teaching job, but she found that jobs teaching high school physical education without required coaching responsibilities were hard to find. Meg wanted to teach physical education, but did not want to have to spend nights and weekends away from her family. Finally she was offered and accepted a job teaching elementary physical education.

Meg has been pretty discouraged with her recent teaching situations. For four years she struggled with double classes in which she found it impossible to really teach because of the overwhelming number of children. When she finally transferred to a new school she was discouraged to learn that her replacement at the previous school was a teacher who was willing to play a mass game with the fifty children each period, instead of teaching

motor skills. In her new school Meg was expected to write lesson plans for the classroom teachers to use on the days their classes did not come to her for physical education. Although Meg was very conscientious about providing the lessons, they were rarely used. In the last several years Meg has had to deal with the difficulty of working with a series of new or unprepared colleagues.

Meg is currently considering alternative job possibilities. Though she still loves teaching physical education, she finds the teaching load at the elementary level to be very difficult and being in the sun and wind for six hours a day to be extremely tiring. She is considering looking for a high school job teaching German, her minor, since she wouldn't be required to coach and would only have to teach six or seven periods a day, instead of twelve.

Another possibility Meg has considered is owning her own business. Although she feels she would work hard enough to make it go, always in the back of her mind is the realization that she would have to give up time with her family, and she's unwilling to do that. Meg spends a lot of time talking with her children and is proud that they have grown up to be productive members of society.

Meg is at ease with the fact that teachers don't make very good salaries, but wishes that there were at least some recognition for a job well done. She feels slightly resentful that she is paid the same as other teachers who are not performing very well. She reports she has only had one principal who she felt really made an effort to know what was going on and provided strokes for good teaching.

Meg and her husband built their own house to save labor costs. This was a very stressful experience since they spent summers and every weekend

for several years working on it. They survived the experience and now have a comfortable place to live and acceptable mortgage payments. If they had not provided their own labor for their home, Meg does not think they would be able to make it on two teachers' salaries. Meg and her husband appreciate the time together being teachers affords them. They treasure the opportunity to travel together to summer institutes and workshops and spend time with their children.

Rachel (physical education)

Rachel is a white female about 50 years of age. She grew up in Chicago and was heavily influenced by the civil unrest of the sixties. Her father died when she was six. Rachel's mother and stepfather, whom she described as a card-carrying communist, took part in many marches and protests. On her first job, when another teacher left, Rachel inherited the position of campus leader of the teachers' union. That year the Chicago teachers went out on strike, and Rachel found herself on the picket line. She described it as an ugly situation. Although Rachel is considered fairly liberal in her thinking, she reported that, compared to her parents and friends in Chicago, she was pretty conservative.

Rachel remarked that she felt the fact that she was tall and strong had affected her whole life. She was her full height in 5th grade and was very active as a child. She enjoyed participating in leaders' clubs in her school. She attributed her sport interest to excellent teachers in elementary school and junior high.

Rachel was encouraged to consider architecture as a career when she was in 8th grade because of high scores on a spatial-ability test, but the general consensus was that girls didn't become architects so she didn't take the

recommendation seriously. Rachel's entry into a career in physical education was influenced by three factors: her love of movement, the inspiration of several teachers, and insecurity about her intelligence. She attributes this lack of confidence in her academic abilities to growing up in a very competitive academic environment. Although she is now a member of MENSA, one of the reasons she chose physical education was the impression "that you didn't have to be very smart to study physical education." After completing her degree, she felt the physical education curriculum was more challenging than many other majors she had considered.

After college, she married and began teaching elementary physical education. When her husband decided to go back to school in his home state, she secured a position there, teaching double classes of sixty kindergarten children. Rachel attributed her survival in these first teaching jobs to the excellent training she had received during student teaching from her cooperating teacher. Two years later, moving with her husband again, she was unable to find a new job in their new location and began work on a master's degree. She got a teaching assistantship and thoroughly enjoyed working with college students.

She never completed this degree because, before she finished her thesis, she became pregnant and they moved again. She and her husband had two children. Rachel stayed home at first and then worked part-time when her children were young. Her children attended an alternative pre-school that she described with delight as providing an integrated, holistic learning experience. Her husband's work caused them to move again, and again Rachel filled out applications for jobs. She was amazed by the questions on the applications such as "Do you believe in a Supreme Being?" to which she responded "Not relevant to my teaching ability." When she didn't get a job,

she once more decided to go back to school, this time in health education. She was offered a teaching assistantship for an elementary physical education methods course. She enjoyed this college level teaching, both for the opportunity to work with adults and for the freedom it provided in her daily life.

A divorce pushed Rachel back into full-time employment. She taught first at a low-income school and then, when the opportunity arose, transferred to a higher-income school nearer to her home. Her children were now teenagers and their transportation was getting to be a problem. Life as a single parent was not easy financially, and Rachel considered entering administration to increase her salary. She spent two years completing an administrator's certificate but found the job market in elementary administration difficult to break into as a white woman. She also decided that, to be an administrator, she would have to give up too many of her time-consuming extracurricular activities and eventually gave up her interest in administrative positions. She is frustrated that she continues to be in heavy debt and that she wasn't able to provide for her children in the way she would have liked, but is generally happy with her own daily lifestyle.

Each summer throughout her career Rachel taught at, and her children attended, a music and drama camp. This summer activity has always been a big part of her life. One of the camp directors had a major influence on her attitude toward health and fitness. Because of his influence, Rachel became one of the charter life members of the National Jogging Association by jogging 1,000 miles in one year. She feels strongly that physical education needs to promote healthy lifestyles and puts a great deal of effort into alerting her students to opportunities to participate in physical activities within the community. She is an active race-walker and jogger. She also participates in

an Israeli folk dance group and sings in a community chorus. She often brings pieces of these interests into her classes. Rachel enjoys being a teacher, especially because of the opportunity to help children to look through stereotypes and broaden their perspective of the world.

Sharon (physical education)

Sharon is a white female about 40 years of age, who has taught physical education in a private elementary school for the past 15 years. In addition to her teaching, she has served as the chair of a number of committees that have in many ways restructured the school, including the discipline committee and the Earth Day committee. As a result of personal and professional interests, she also sponsors a runners' club and provides faculty exercise classes. Sharon is considered a leader in the school.

Sharon grew up in a large, close-knit family. She enjoyed school, but in high school paid more attention to social activities than to academics. She married right after high school, went to college without knowing what she wanted to do, and dropped out after a couple of semesters. To support themselves, she and her husband worked in mental health care settings, and eventually each took a turn working while the other returned to school. Indicating her commitment to the importance of work, Sharon stated, "I think it's real important that people are productive, and that they give something back to their environment and their society." Since she had been out in the work world, Sharon felt that going to school was a real treat and so made the best of it. She felt she had not paid a lot of attention during elementary and high school, and so had a lot to learn and will always be a student.

Sharon is not sure how she got interested in teaching or physical education. She remembered having a terrible physical education teacher in high school and feeling there must be a better way to teach. Sharon found a personal attraction to being physically active and strongly believed in the health benefits of an active lifestyle. While in college Sharon "treated herself" to an extra physical activity course each semester, so she could learn new skills. She felt divinely led to become a teacher.

Honored as the outstanding student teacher in her class, Sharon was recruited by a small private school to teach physical education in grades 1 through 6. There she worked with another teacher,whom she credits with shaping her views about physical education for children. Since she enjoyed being a student, Sharon continued her studies in a master's degree program in exercise physiology.

Sharon feels that during her early teaching, without children of her own, she had an outpouring of love to shower on the children she taught. When she had her own child, five years later, she felt that this overflow of love changed slightly. Some of her attention was diverted from the children at school to her own child, but her understanding of, and her skills for working with children and parents, increased substantially.

During the first ten years of Sharon's teaching, the school enlarged to include 7th and 8th grades and two additional physical education teachers. A few years later Sharon's mentor left, and Sharon took over as director of the lower-school physical education program. She and her colleagues continued to develop their program and made several presentations at national conferences. Soon Sharon returned to school again, and she was enthralled by a tutoring experience during a reading methods course. To follow this interest, she enrolled in a doctoral program in reading. As she developed

reading expertise through her doctoral program, Sharon was able to arrange to teach 1/2 day of reading and 1/2 of physical education. She praises the support for professional growth her school provides. Not only are funds available for higher education, as well as conference and workshop attendance, but, when she was ready, the administration trusted her professional competence and supported her interest in teaching a new subject area. Sharon sings high praises for her school.

Sharon speaks of three life influences on her teaching. The first comes from lessons she is learning from being a parent. Both through experience, and from parenting classes, Sharon feels she has gained an important awareness of children and their lives. She has a better sense of what children's daily lives are like, and feels she is more empathetic and helpful to parents.

A second influence has come from her interactions with her husband. She and her husband have a deep commitment to their marriage, and they work together to keep it healthy. Through the years Sharon feels she learned that nothing is entirely black or white, and that every negotiation needs to work toward a solution that is good for both parties. She believes this attitude also is essential in teaching.

The third major life influence on her teaching has been dealing with her own parents' alcoholism. She and her sister have attended support groups and have learned a great deal about controlling their own lives and how not to function as enablers. She also has come to recognize the limits of her influence and the importance of helping others to take responsibility for their own lives.

Tom (physical education)

Tom is a fifty year old white male who re-entered teaching six years ago after a series of other careers. He feels strongly about his teaching, calling it a ministry. Tom grew up in a small town and was an average student in school. His father was the principal of the elementary school he attended. He remembers his father always working, coaching during the school year, and pumping gas during the summer, to make ends meet. Tom also had an older brother he looked up to who became a coach like his dad.

When Tom first went to college, he had a wonderful time playing and being a fraternity brother, but he spent little time or attention on his studies. When his friends were approaching graduation, he went to see his adviser and indicated that he would like to graduate too. His adviser convinced him that he was nowhere near graduation and that he should spend time out in the "real world" to decide what he wanted to do with his life .

Tom got married and worked at various jobs, as retail sales clerk, managing a swimming pool, and making dynamite in a factory, until he was drafted in 1966. In basic training he spent many hours in the chapel asking God, "Why me?" Tom considers himself lucky because he spent his entire military career in the United States and did not end up being sent to Viet Nam. After his release from the army he spent several years managing first a student dormitory and later a country club. He enjoyed these positions but found the requirements hard on his family. He had two children by then, and the busiest times at the country club were in the evenings and on weekends. After giving up the country club job, Tom spent a miserable year selling life insurance. Finally, after being "turned on" by an excellent youth sport program run by the parks and recreation department, he returned to college to study physical education at the age of 32.

Following graduation he held several jobs as a physical education specialist. The first was part of a special grant and included an excellent schedule where he saw each class every day, but had no teaching facilities. His wife, also a teacher, became involved in teachers' union struggles with the administration and the next year Tom's contract was not renewed. He attributed this to his wife's activism and the fact that she was tenured while he was not. The next year he taught in a frustrating position where he only saw each class once a week and worked in two schools, one of which had a very difficult principal. Discouraged with these teaching opportunities, Tom opened his own picture frame business. But, when three other franchises also opened in their small town, Tom ended up with a money-losing proposition.

The long string of career changes and the large financial loss on the frame business placed a severe strain on Tom's marriage. Tom felt a real call to the ministry and began to investigate the possibility of attending a seminary in Texas. His wife and children stayed in Wyoming while he set out to explore this possibility. While away, Tom found a counselor who helped him deal with self-esteem problems he was experiencing. To support himself, Tom took a long-term substitute position that renewed his interest in teaching. At the end of the year he returned to his family. They negotiated solutions to some of their problems and decided to give life together another try. The school where Tom had substituted called and offered him a full-time job so he and his family moved to Texas and started a new life for themselves.

Tom is highly regarded by his colleagues as a kind and thoughtful person. He enjoys his teaching, but as he grows older wonders how long it will be before he finds the physical requirements of teaching physical

education too difficult. Because of this concern, he has considered teaching in the classroom or becoming an administrator.

Tom also reported that his salary was of some concern. He has been teaching six years and makes less than $23,000. Except for cost-of-living increases that may occur, he will have to teach three more years before moving up on the salary schedule. His wife, who began her current job at the same time, started at $1,000.00 less but now makes $4,000.00 more.

Tom indicated, however, that he loved his work and felt that it was his calling in life. He felt he had finally found a job that fit his interests, lifestyle and desire to do good in the world.

Allegro (music)

Allegro is a white female in her early fifties, who has been teaching music for over ten years. Her parents came from relatively poor families, but valued education. She felt competent and successful in her early school experiences. Her mother was very interested in music. Allegro began piano lessons when she was nine, loved music, and played the organ for her church while still a teenager.

Soon after graduation from high school, she married a minister, ten years her senior, and enjoyed the roles of wife, homemaker, and mother for fifteen years. When she was 36, she began attending the university and loved being a student again. She started on a part-time basis, commuting over an hour each way. After a couple of years, for several reasons, including the fact that her husband's church was unhappy at losing her complimentary accompaniment and hosting services, her husband gave up his position and they moved closer to the university so she could attend classes full time. Despite working several jobs to help support the family, Allegro felt she was

able to put a lot of attention on her studies since her two older sons were grown and the youngest was ready to graduate from high school.

After completing her undergraduate degree, Allegro taught in a series of positions as she continued her studies. She and her husband taught at a small private school while she studied for a master's degree. Her next job was in a sixth-grade center. She enjoyed this situation where all teachers were subject specialists and each class was considered her class rather than being identified with a classroom teacher. Her choir earned a lot of positive publicity for her school. Next, she entered a Ph.D. program and enjoyed a year as a teaching assistant conducting university courses. Throughout her career Allegro has continued to serve as the music director at local churches.

Allegro was one of the few participants who indicated that she and her husband shared home responsibilities. She was one of only two participants whose husbands had moved to further their wives' careers. Allegro described their relationship as positive and supportive, nurturing each other's interests.

Her present job is in a low-SES elementary school. She feels that her experiences as a parent and in the church have afforded her with excellent music skills and personal skills. She regrets that, although the other teachers respect her personally, music is viewed as a way for them to have a planning period, not as an important part of the curriculum.

Although Allegro enjoys her teaching, there are many frustrating aspects to her elementary position. She leads a choir during her own planning period and wishes others recognized the contribution she could make to the school if her work were taken more seriously. Instead, she finds barriers to having her choir perform; such as if she misses any classes for a performance, some teachers do not get their planning periods. Allegro feels

performing in front of a group is an important part of every child's education, helping develop the polish and poise that are needed to be successful in the world. She is frustrated that, as a teacher with a master's degree and 11 years experience, she makes only $6,000.00 more than a beginning teacher. She also is frustrated that administrators rarely have time to observe classes, so they can't know whether or not she is doing a good job. Eventually, Allegro would like to teach at the college level again.

Ann (art)

Ann is a white female in her mid-forties. Growing up, Ann was a good, serious student in school. In college she studied to be an elementary school classroom teacher, mainly because that was what women did in those days. She has been teaching art at a private school for the past 12 years.

Ann married right out of college and began her teaching career in a sixth-grade class. Her student teaching experience had only involved a couple of days of actual teaching in a second-grade class. After struggling with discipline problems for three years, Ann happily left teaching to start a family. Parenting was her dominant role and she lived a traditional housewife's existence for the next ten years. During this time she took a painting class that renewed an old interest in art. She remembered there being an easel in her class when she was a child, but other students always finished their work first, so she never got a chance to paint. She had always coveted the opportunity to paint.

When Ann got divorced she had to find a way to support herself, and so she went back to the university to study art education. She dearly loved this time as a student and began to work part-time as an art teacher while she finished her certification. At first Ann had rejected the idea of teaching art

because of all the "mess and craziness", but after observing a competent teacher, whom she saw as an excellent role model, she decided to give it a try. Although Ann still feels that discipline is not her strong point, she has developed a structure that works reasonably well in her classes. She enjoys allowing a more relaxed atmosphere than in most classrooms and feels that the personal interactions that occur during her classes are very important. The pride students feel in personally creating something is another benefit of her art classes.

A number of years ago, Ann became involved in an awareness group called Beyond War. She felt a need to become more politically active and this group seemed to fit that need. "I remember, and I say this with a good deal of guilt, just watching the news during the Vietnam War and not feeling particularly involved. My Beyond War experience was the awakening of the idea that I do have some power as a citizen and am not just a victim of the system." Through Beyond War, Ann became interested in and attended several curriculum workshops on conflict resolution. She is scheduled to present a workshop for her own faculty and is hoping to start a conflict resolution training program for students at her school.

In addition to her work in conflict resolution, Ann recently began work on a master's degree in counseling. Listening to conversations during her class has spurred an interest in working with students on a more personal level. She has mixed feelings about leaving the art classroom, losing the present contact she has with all the students in the school. She worries even more about having to change schools. She loves her present school's environment and feels that the faculty in her school, particularly the director who hired her, provided a great deal of support and encouragement during a difficult time in her life. As a result of these mixed feelings, Ann is content

to learn from her studies and just wait and see what opportunities present themselves for her to use her new skills.

Judy (music)

In her sixth decade, Judy is a white female who has been teaching for over 40 years. She entered a convent at age 17.

> My father was an alcoholic, and whether my decision going to the convent had something to do with wanting to get out of that situation or whether it was really something that I wanted to do, what 17 year old girl knows? ... Yet it was a different time and a different age and I was very idealistic.

Two months after entering the convent, Judy began her teaching career in a second-grade classroom. When the nun teaching first grade next door broke her hip roller skating, Judy inherited that class as well for a total of 54 students. After a year out of the classroom for religious study, she was assigned a third-grade class with 70 children and was in line for a fourth-grade with 82 children the following year, when she was rescued by the need for an organist and choir director at another parish school. She had played the church organ and been in choirs all her life and so began her career as a music teacher, simultaneously teaching history to the senior football team. Fortunately, the captain of the football team had a crush on Judy and that helped her control the class. Her students laughed at her when she lectured about the election because she was not yet old enough to vote.

For many years Judy taught her own first- or second-grade class as well as teaching music to other classes in the school. During this time she worked on her college degree and teacher certification, taking one or two classes a year. Because of her years of teaching experience, when her college instructors had to be out of town they often asked her to conduct the class for

them. After teaching for 12 years, she received her diploma and teaching certificate, smashing the old convent speed record of completing a degree in 23 years.

At age 38 Judy left the convent and began to broaden her career and personal life experiences. She continued to teach in parochial schools for a few years, but eventually moved into public education. During these years she was the curriculum director of a head start program, and principal of one school where she was teaching. She married and had two children. When her children were young, she started her own Montessori school and owned and operated a day-care. In addition, she taught methods courses at a local college. Judy also spent a couple of years as the principal of a church school in a very low-income area. She developed skills as a reading specialist and wrote a reading curriculum.

Even after leaving the convent, Judy was very involved in her church. For years she ran a daily religious education program, played the organ at special occasions, and was in charge of decorating the church for various festivities. When her husband got a better-paying job and her son complained about how little time she had for him, Judy relinquished her church responsibilities. She was surprised to find how much calmer she was the rest of the day when she no longer had to finish one job to get on to the next.

Another incident in her life that Judy found significant was a time when she and her husband had to live apart because the job he secured was in another town. She found that, at 50 years of age, she began to develop a sense of independence. Having entered the convent at age 17, she felt she had never had to rely on herself. Going from convent to marriage also postponed this growing stage. The experience of being on her own improved her sense

of self-worth. It helped her learn to speak out, which was particularly difficult after living in the convent, where the voice of a superior was the voice of God.

Although for the most part Judy has never really worried about money, she regrets that they were unable to scrape up the money for her daughter to go to Russia with the school band. Also, she worries that family savings have been spent on their first child's education and nothing is left for her other child's college tuition. She can teach legally in the district until she's 70, but is not sure she wants to teach until she's 70. Judy still does tutoring and gives music lessons on the side for a little additional money.

Despite concern about whether she will still want to be teaching in ten years, Judy still is looking for new challenges. She enjoys teaching music, but also is anxious to spend more time developing her reading curriculum and is considering applying for a first-grade teaching job.

Kate (music)

Kate is a 35-year-old Hispanic female. Although she has only been teaching about 10 years, she has participated in several exciting projects. She and several other teachers at her school developed a school-wide behavior reinforcement program which received national recognition. She is a member of Delta Kappa Gamma, a national honorary for women in education, and presented the behavior program at its national convention. The program is currently being replicated at several schools across the country. Kate also has served on district-wide, curriculum-writing commitees. She is an active professional.

Kate grew up in a family of four children. Her father was an alcoholic and her parents divorced, remarried, and divorced again, when she was

young. Kate took on extra responsibilities in the family because of this situation. Her father died when she was sixteen. Her siblings are spread over the country now and do not stay in very close contact. Kate remembered her family's singing together as one of the positive aspects of her childhood.

Although music was her first interest, Kate majored in Spanish at the university, at the suggestion of her mother. She was not highly motivated and barely made it through. After graduation she worked as a secretary for a while before deciding she wanted to go back to college and become a music teacher. She did very well in music and thoroughly enjoyed her studies. She is presently considering returning for a master's degree in music education.

Kate has taught at the same elementary school for the past 10 years. She reported that at one point she was beginning to get swallowed up by her job, doing PTA programs every month and working with her students to take part in special events. She felt that this affected her personal relationships and so tried to create more reasonable expectations for herself. Whereas she used to spend all day Saturday in the library doing lesson plans, she now works weekdays until five and then tries to leave most of her work at school. Although resigned to the fact that she doesn't make much money, Kate reports several ways this has negatively affected her life. She doesn't have money for travel or vacations and rarely can afford a movie. She is able to make ends meet by keeping a pretty tight budget, but there is little money to spare. Every once in a while Kate takes $20.00 and spends it on herself as a special treat.

Kate has thought a lot about life and personal relationships. For the past five years she has been personally involved with a musician. During the course of this and other earlier relationships, Kate recognized a tendency in herself to be co-dependent and tried to educate herself about related

behaviors. At one time during a period of personal depression, Kate considered suicide. This brush with death, and her partner's close-to-death experience with leukemia, has been an awakening force in her struggle to understand life. She feels that from these efforts she emerged with the understanding that she is responsible for her own life.

Recently Kate bought a double-wide mobile home and is beginning to feel an urge to create a real home for herself. Her partner, not able to support himself as a musician, has taken a job as a bus driver and is finally contributing financially to the household. He, like her father, has a problem with alcohol and recently has agreed to get some help. In many ways Kate feels that her life is really coming together.

Nancy (music)

Nancy is a white female about 55 years of age. She has approximately 30 years teaching experience and is active in her church, community, and school. Nancy helped write the district music curriculum, which is recognized as one of finest in the state. She also established a Christmas Carol Festival that has been credited with bringing many people in her community together.

Nancy's mother managed the school cafeteria when Nancy was growing up. Nancy usually went to work with her mother and so literally has been connected with schools all her life. She enjoyed school and started piano lessons when she was about eight. Nancy was chosen for the all-state choir during high school and at that point decided she wanted to study music education in college.

She married, had a child, and began teaching on an emergency certificate before completing her college coursework. She had two more

children and stayed home for three years with one baby and one year with the other. Ten years later she completed her degree. Taking summer courses while trying to care for three children was a nightmare.

Nancy's husband was a band director, and Nancy and their boys often accompanied him on choir and band trips. As a family, they also spent a good deal of time camping in the summers. Both of these activities gave her children a chance to see the country.

During her first 20 years of teaching Nancy worked in many migrant areas where there was little equipment, but she felt parent support for education was strong. She typically taught a second- or third-grade class part of the day and then taught music to other classes during the rest of the day. Lesson plans were not required and there was no standard curriculum. She learned to create many things herself.

Twelve years ago Nancy and her family moved to a suburban community and her life changed in several ways. Nancy secured a job in a middle-to-upper-SES school and felt she had arrived in heaven because of all the equipment that was available. A couple years later her marriage, which had been rocky for some time, ended. She came home one day and found her husband was gone. Her son had been sent to give her the news. She felt that the pressure of all the extra time band directors spend on their jobs was a contributing factor to the breakup of their marriage. Her husband tended to drink too much and was troubled by stress.

Although this was a very tough time for Nancy, she feels that the last 10 years have been good ones for her. Her colleagues were very supportive of her as she moved through the grieving states related to her divorce. She is very grateful for her profession, in which she was able to bury herself, during this difficult time in her life. Since her children were grown, she had lots of

time to pour into her work. She has learned to depend on herself more and has more freedom.

Nancy is proud of the support she has generated among parents for her program, but frustrated by the general lack of support for the arts in education. She finds her class schedule "horrendous". She also feels that changes in society over the past decade have created children who bring many more problems to school with them and make teaching a much more difficult job.

Despite these problems, Nancy considers her last ten years to be the highlight of her teaching career. She loves seeing children actually learn new skills and enjoys the closeness she has with her students. She meets her choir after school and does several performances with them each year. Her sons are very supportive of her work and often attend her students' performances. Teaching music is exciting for her because "music will be with them forever.... As you get older you can't always continue your interest in athletics for instance, but music is with you until the day you die." On the other hand, although she loves her work, Nancy says she does not live music 24 hours a day. Aside from attending concerts, most of her recreation is in other areas.

Tammy (music)

Tammy is a white female about 40 years of age. She grew up among a caring family in a rural area. Her family did not have a lot of money, but they always had a safe, secure home and enough to eat. Tammy has fond memories of her childhood. Tammy's father was an agriculture teacher and often took his children with him to visit farms and animals. Tammy had a sister and a little brother who had some medical problems that made early

care for him difficult, but his problems lessened as time when on. Tammy's mother had always wanted to play the piano but, as they could not afford more than one set of lessons, arranged for Tammy to have lessons at the age of five instead of herself.

When she was 10 years old, Tammy's family moved to a large city where her parents felt the children would have more opportunities. Tammy became a member of the school choir and band and often played the organ in her church. She attended a local junior college and felt a great camaraderie with her fellow music students. Although she had been very shy and quiet in high school, when performing musically she felt confident and comfortable. During college she went through a time of personal rebellion, wearing old army clothes and feeling part of the hippie generation.

After college Tammy married an Hispanic hairdresser and this union affected several aspects of her life. She described him as her "exact opposite in background". He was very protective of her and helped her through the craziness of her beginning years of teaching. She feels she has been assigned to an interesting assortment of teaching positions during her career because of her minority surname. She started out in an average school where she experimented with creative additions to the curriculum. After three years, this school changed to an individually-guided curriculum that sounded awful to Tammy, and she asked for a transfer. She was assigned to a low-income, minority school that had a very weak administration. It was a difficult experience. "I stayed there only one year because I got pregnant. It was time for me to get pregnant in my marriage but it was also a good time to get out of there."

This was not the end of her teaching career, however. After a year of being home with her new baby, her husband asserted that they couldn't make

it financially on his salary. Tammy went back to work and again was assigned to a low-income school with a lot of problems. Tammy stayed in this situation because she liked the teachers, but felt the kids were wild. "I took switchblades away from kids, and I had kids that were so high that they couldn't do anything. ... I had to adapt my teaching to them because, for the most part, they didn't read. So I made up my own curriculum. We did things like make TV commercials and jingles." Following this, she was assigned a part-time position at each of two schools, one low-SES and the other high-SES. In these settings Tammy experienced a real contrast in teaching situations. Eventually she got a full time job at the high-SES school, where the children came ready to learn, and she felt she had gone to heaven. "Teachers supported you, the principal supported you with supplies, the kids wanted to learn. I started teaching what I wanted to teach. I want to stay here until I die with my boots on."

Tammy's enthusiastic description of her current teaching situation provided little insight into the struggles she had experienced in her family life. Her two sons have grown up without serious problems, but her daughter has gone through some severe emotional problems. As a teenager, her daughter became very difficult to live with, skipping school and having temper tantrums. After a suicide attempt, her daughter spent time in residential facilities trying to gain control over her life. She was diagnosed as manic-depressive, which it turned out also was the diagnosis provided for Tammy's mother. Around this same time, it became clear that Tammy's husband was an alcoholic, and, as the result of an incident after he had been drinking, he was directed by the court to get treatment. Tammy praised her school and the people she worked with for all their support during these difficult times.

The support provided by her colleagues, however, was not the only interaction of her personal life with her job. Tammy felt that the difficulties at home often made her work harder at school. When her personal life was falling apart, she needed to feel successful in some other role and her job provided that opportunity. She found it was possible to block out the rest of her troubles when she gave total attention to her teaching, and that afforded her some personal relief.

Tammy felt her personal-life experiences helped her be more empathetic and supportive of her students and their parents. When talking to parents whose child was about to begin medication for hyperactivity, she was able to relate how medication had helped her daughter to function and how medication was needed because of a chemical disorder, not because they were bad parents. This sensitivity is important to Tammy.

In addition to her commitment to teaching and interacting with parents, Tammy feels strongly about the value of music in children's lives. "It is such a part of their lives: it's on the TV, it's on the elevators, it's something to relax them. It's something that reaches over cultures. It's something that reaches over language barriers, and it's something so important that they're never going to get away from it."

Jane (classroom)

Jane is a white female in her late fifties. Her mother died when she was thirteen and Jane assumed many homemaking and parenting roles. Jane wanted to major in science in college, but her family didn't think that was appropriate. "I was Miss Goody Two Shoes growing up and did what people told me. I probably could have done something different if I had raised a fuss, but I loved English [too], so that's what I did." She completed

teaching certification so she could support her new husband who was attending medical school. When her husband completed his medical degree, Jane left teaching to raise her children. She did not teach for the next fourteen years. Fifteen years ago she re-entered the profession.

Jane's early teaching experiences varied a great deal, from very difficult conditions to a "nice school with a good administration". Jane had her first child in the middle of a school year and stayed home with him for the rest of that year. She felt that her next assignment, which was a very difficult one, was given to her as punishment for not completing the previous year. She struggled with the time and energy required to be a full-time mother, homemaker, and teacher. Her husband was busy with his studies and did not help with any home tasks.

Over the years they moved several times in response to her husband's career interests. While her children were growing up Jane was an active PTA member and volunteer in the schools. At one point, when she had some serious concerns about her son's class, she became active in a group trying to improve the schools and spoke often at school board meetings about her concerns.

Jane had initially envisioned teaching as a way to put her husband through school. While she stayed home to raise her children, she viewed her teaching as a finished chapter in her life. As her children grew up, she considered new activities. Remembering the overwhelming needs of disadvantaged children she had taught, Jane decided she would like to get a better background and then volunteer in schools with underprivileged children. Her marriage, rocky all along, at this point disintegrated and she found herself in need of a job. After some additional training, she secured a job in a private school teaching 4th grade. During her first year back in

teaching, she really struggled, relying heavily on the help and support of her colleagues. "When I came back I was so worried about how I was going to manage my life by myself that that took precedence over everything else. It was only when I realized that I could do it by myself, that I was doing all right and I would be able to manage it, that I began to relax and be a fairly decent teacher."

Jane finds teaching fun and is glad she chose teaching as a profession. At one point she did get her real estate license, but says selling real estate would not make her a happy person. By the end of each year, however, Jane feels emotionally and physically drained and sees the summer as a time of renewal. She works in her classroom every morning for about a month in the summer getting ready for the coming year. "It's like storing up nuts for the winter. I just chuckle to myself when I feel I've got my pantry all stocked for the coming year." She also appreciates time in her garden, attending workshops and conferences, and travels with fellow teachers. These trips bring them closer together and develop support bonds that are very important in their work at the school, as well as bringing new information into the classroom.

Kristin (classroom)

Kristin is a white, female, third-grade teacher in her thirties. She loves teaching and says that's all she ever wanted to do with her life. Her father wanted her to join his optometry business, but she had her heart set on teaching. Kristin feels the most important things in teaching are making lessons interesting and exciting and helping children to feel good about themselves.

Kristin reported a happy childhood in which she was an only child and was doted on by a stay-at-home mom. Kristin always enjoyed and did well in school, describing herself as shy and always wanting to please. She attended college knowing she wanted to be an elementary school teacher. In her senior year she married a young man studying to be a police officer. During her student teaching semester he was assigned to another town, so she moved home with her parents and then joined him at the end of the semester.

The following year she took the only job offered her. It was at an alternative school where she was hired as a reading specialist. She was surprised to learn on the first day that all the students had been expelled from their high schools for one reason or another. That first year of teaching was a real eye-opener for her. Although she did some creative work attempting to help her students learn to read, she was often threatened and was generally miserable . In addition to all her other problems that year, Kristin became very sick and almost died of a ruptured appendix. As a result, she was told she would be unable to have children.

She left the alternative school at the end of that first year and got a job in an elementary school where teaching matched her dreams. Several years later a job opportunity opened for her husband, and family ties called them back to their home town. During the next couple of years Kristin had temporary appointments in a number of "good" schools. At this point she and her husband adopted a baby and Kristin took a year of parenting leave. Returning the following year, she received a permanent position and has been at that school ever since. Kristin did become pregnant, despite the earlier predictions, and now has two children two years apart. Kristin's father died last year of lung cancer. She has always enjoyed a lot of family support and

now misses him. The experience has made her feel even more strongly about the importance of family.

Kristin has thought about getting her counseling certification and becoming a school counselor. She sees a great need for counseling services among her students. She loves teaching and hopes to continue working in elementary schools until she retires.

Letisha (classroom)

Letisha is a black female in her mid-thirties. She has taught primary grades for the past 15 years and is presently completing certification in administration. She participates in numerous school and district committees and teaches a special dyslexia program. Letisha feels strongly that administrators need to have considerable experience in the classroom to have a good understanding of school needs. She feels she could make a professional contribution as an administrator, as well as provide a better life for her family.

Letisha grew up in a large, extended family. Her father was abusive to her mother, but was not present during much of her childhood. Letisha felt a responsibility to her mother and often sat close to her side late into the night as her mother was ironing, as a sort of a guardian angel. At one point Letisha felt her mother almost became an alcoholic because of her father's behavior. Her father's family told her mother that she would never make it with four children and that her children would never become anything. That makes Letisha even more proud of her accomplishments.

Letisha reported that she always had wanted to be a teacher. As a child, she would line up her dolls and cousins and play school. After high school she started college, but was bored and dropped out. She served as a teacher's

aide for a while before returning to complete her degree and teaching certification. As a result of her years as an aide, by the time she accepted her first teaching position, she already had several years' experience in the classroom.

Married to a police officer, Letisha feels that there is a good deal of stress in both professions. Although her husband does not bring work home like she does, he does bring home stress. She takes medication for high blood pressure. She and her husband have been through some rough times, including a separation, but she calls it a good separation. It was not because they did not love each other, but rather because they had trouble living together. One of their disagreements centered on the fact that Letisha found it difficult to keep house and do both her school work and graduate studies. She estimates she spends about two hours each night on schoolwork. Her lack of housekeeping has often been a bone of contention.

Letisha has gotten a lot of help from her family, particularly her mother, in caring for her children while she works and goes to school. Her husband helped a lot with the children when they were little, but is not as active with them as teenagers. Because they are both so busy, Letisha and her family eat out several times a week. She sometimes worries about the nutritional problems of eating fast food so often, but doesn't see any other good solutions in their busy lives.

Sally (classroom)

Sally is a white female about 35 years of age. She has two children, six and ten, and describes her parenting as a very important part of her life, probably the most important part. She has taught second through fifth grades and spent one year as a social studies specialist in a middle school. Sally

enthusiastically describes several teams of excellent teachers she has worked with over the course of her career, but feels that the teachers she is presently working with are the very best. They work well together, share their planning responsibilities, and have received several awards for their students' achievements.

Sally's childhood was spent in a working-class community where everyone had enough, but there were not a lot of extras. She grew up with the same friends from kindergarten through high school and many of them went off to the local college together. Sally recalls that she and her friends felt they were really stretching to go to college and become teachers.

Sally married her high school sweetheart and, upon graduation, followed his interests to a job in another state. Her first teaching job was in a new open-classroom school. That job was frustrating because no one knew how to actually carry out this new educational concept. During this time Sally enjoyed working with an excellent colleague and felt things improved greatly by the end of the second year.

When she had her first child, Sally stopped teaching for two years, but found that caring for the baby and doing craft projects were not as much of a challenge as she would like. She returned to teaching for four years, then stopped teaching again when her second child was born. About the time Sally decided that she would stay home one more year before putting her younger child in day care, her husband announced he wanted a divorce and Sally was forced back into the work force.

Sally found dealing with the divorce difficult for many reasons. Financially it changed her life drastically. She worries most about being able to survive financially during retirement. But even more than the financial concerns, the divorce changed her feelings about choices in her life. She had

always appreciated the many choices available to her but, after the divorce, felt restricted and without options such as staying home with her children. After teaching a year, Sally felt she needed a change and some distance from her ex-husband, who had re-married. She sold her house, arranged for a leave of absence, and returned to her hometown in Louisiana to enter a master's degree program. Sally's parents helped with her children while she took graduate classes and taught at a local middle school.

By the time she finished her degree, Sally was tired of arranging her children's trips back and forth to see their father and decided she was ready to return to Texas. She bought a new house, found that her former principal had a fifth-grade position available for her, and moved back to Texas to start anew. Although she loves her work and appreciates the arrangement of a teacher's workday and yearly schedule, Sally is bitter and scared about the lack of financial stability she faces as a single parent. She believes that it would be wrong to encourage young women to go into teaching. When she started, teaching was considered a good fall-back option for women but, in this day and age, she feels women never know when they will be out on their own and teaching just does not pay enough.

Sally reported that when she first started teaching she saw everything as black or white. She has begun to appreciate the shades of gray that give tone and depth to the daily picture. At first she fought the other roles in the classroom that competed with her role as a teacher. She did not want to be a mother, counselor, or preacher to her students. Due to the experiences in her personal life and in graduate classes, Sally has revised her position, now stating that students' personal needs do not just go away and that, to be successful, a teacher must deal with the whole child.

Sandy (classroom)

Sandy is a female in her early fifties who has 15 years teaching experience. She started teaching right after college and continued for six years before taking time out to raise her two children. During the 14 years she stayed home with her children she did various substituting jobs as well as community service. She values this experience for the insight and experience it gave her into how organizations function. She loves working in elementary schools because children provide so much love, but is frustrated by ridiculous administrative policies on testing.

Sandy had severe asthma while growing up and spent a good deal of time, when she was supposed to be in physical education, as an aide to the school nurse. She considered nursing as a career, but living with her mother's hypochondriac tendencies made daily interactions with patients difficult for her. Because of her scepticism of patients' complaints, Sandy decided against nursing, but now wishes she had dealt with the problem and pursued that line of work. She would like to teach nursing and still thinks about going back to school, but does not feel it would be useful to change careers at this stage in her life.

At the time when she was first making career decisions, Sandy described herself as very meek and shy, "a real follower". She liked teaching because it was like being in drama productions. She could forget her shyness and act another part up in front of the class. Indicating another reason she enjoys teaching, Sandy stated, "My husband is a very strong individual and teaching gives me a sense of self-worth outside the home. It gives me an identity. I knew that raising children was the most important job I could do, but that's not the way he felt." Looking back, Sandy feels her husband's

challenges were probably good for her development, since she constantly pushed herself to show that she also was a professional.

Sandy's first teaching experience was in an upper-class school that was blessed with a good staff and administration. Six years later she stopped teaching and stayed home with her two children. Following her engineer husband's career plans, the family moved to Colorado while her children were young. Sandy became an active volunteer in what she described as a wonderful community.

As her children grew older, Sandy began to substitute and valued the opportunity that that gave her of working with a number of excellent principals and teachers. She joined Delta Kappa Gamma, a national education honorary for women, and felt that the opportunities afforded by this group of committed professionals were instrumental in her growth as a teacher. She became known for her good discipline and was sought after as a valued substitute teacher. At the beginning of one year, she was asked to start first-grade classes three different times while schools searched for emergency additions to their staffs. Not wanting a full-time job, she declined offers of permanent positions with the first two classes, but finally, after consulting with her family, agreed to stay as the permanent teacher of the third class.

At this point her husband, unhappy with his job, sold his engineering firm. He looked at other opportunities in the area. He was unhappy working for anyone else and, because of contractual agreements in the sale of his firm, could not start a new company for three years. Finally he decided to relocate in Texas.

Having just gotten back into full-time teaching and having teenagers who loved their schools and community, it was difficult for Sandy to even think about moving. While her husband went ahead to look for work, Sandy

and her children stayed behind to finish the school year. They sadly left Colorado the next summer. Adjustments were difficult in the new schools and new surroundings and Sandy had to start all over again working her way into the school district. Right after she finally sent her resignation to Colorado, she found that her husband was still not happy with his work, but he had failed to communicate with her about his feelings. He suggested that had they not left Colorado at the beginning of the summer to join him, he would have returned. Meanwhile, their two children were having serious difficulties adjusting and the family went through extensive counseling. Their teenage son left home and lived on the streets for a while. He finally got his life back together with a lot of professional help.

Sandy feels that she learned a lot from these personal trials. She became more understanding and empathetic about personal struggles of her students but more than that she became a stronger person herself. Whereas she had been a shy, meek college student and young teacher, she is now a strong woman not afraid to face challenges ahead. She and her husband still have trouble communicating and she believes he drinks too much. In addition, her parents, who live 4 hours away, are aging and need a great deal of attention. Despite these problems Sandy feels able to cope. She has gotten back into exercising, playing tennis, walking, and bike-riding regularly to relieve stress and promote a positive mental attitude. She is teaching first-grade and feels confident in dealing with her life.

Sarah (classroom)

Sarah is a white woman about sixty years of age. She was brought up in a large family which valued education, especially reading. "I thought teachers were special and I had 2 or 3 along the way that really sparked my curiosity

about the rest of the world." Sarah had a wonderful first-teaching experience under an excellent principal who helped her grow as a teacher.

During college, Sarah had married a young man who was also majoring in education. She stopped teaching when their second son was born. During the time she was home with her two children, she started a day-care center and continued to be involved in education. After working in the day-care center for seven years, she decided to start a master's degree. Before she started her first course, she became pregnant with their third child and decided she didn't have the energy to pursue a degree and raise three children so gave up her advanced studies. She continued to volunteer and tutor for the next several years.

Twenty-five years ago Sarah and her family made their last move so her husband could take a position at a university. Sarah started volunteering at the local elementary school since all her sons were now in school. After volunteering awhile, she began to substitute. She was a popular substitute and spent time in schools all across a large district. Eventually, following the recommendations of the teachers and administrators she worked with, Sarah updated her credentials and got a job teaching at her neighborhood elementary school. Her two oldest sons attended the local university and one of them volunteered at her elementary school. They both were killed in a car accident caused by a drunken driver. She and her youngest son happened on the scene right after the collision. Seventeen years later the pain is still very present. The tragedy has led her to speak out about what she thinks is wrong in the world and in education. She feels very strongly (1) about developmental issues in education and (2) that primary emphasis should be placed on humanistic early education.

Sarah leads the youth group at her church, is active in MADD, and does a great deal of service in the community. She continues to be very concerned about inequities and the problems of the low-income schools she observed while substituting. When she retires, she wants to volunteer in one of those schools.

Now that the participants have been introduced, it is appropriate to say a few words about the consequences of including only one male participant. In many instances, Tom's experiences and concerns were similar to those expressed by the other participants. He identified, for instance, the same rewards and frustrations involved in teaching as the others. In these cases his quotations will appear side by side with the other particpants. In other cases, in which there were substantial differences between Tom's experience and that of the other particpants, it clearly is possible that this was based on gender. Since gender differences in life/career interactions were not a central focus of this study, however, (more males were not included for logistical reasons), no attempt has been made to identify gender-related themes based on Tom's descriptions alone. As long as readers remember that Tom's story is unique and does not in any way represent males in general, his experiences add to the richness of the data by providing additional stories and perspectives..

A related issue could be raised for the one black and two Hispanic participants in this study. Although they shared with the rest of the participants many the most common themes related to being women, there were a few instances where their individual experiences differed from the group. Again, since insuring equal representation of ethnic groups among the participants in each group would have been a logistical impossibility, it is inappropriate to identify themes for ethnic groups based on these data.

Again, the experiences of these participants have been included because their experiences as individuals add to the richness of the data.

Finally, one must remember that all the teachers in this study were presently teaching in Texas and had lived there for a number of years. State issues of educational reform as well as cultural norms obviously influenced the lives of the participants. There may be particular aspects of data therefore that are unique to Texas or to the south. The reader will have to decide which themes and comments are appropriate in their own environment.

Themes Common to All Participants

As indicated in the biographical sketches, life/career interactions ranged from simple, such as bringing personal interests into one's teaching, to complex, as in personal changes attributed to surviving the death of one's children or going through a divorce. In the following section, commonalities among participants' career experiences, regardless of subgroup, are discussed. It is interesting to note how many similarities there are in the accounts of individual career experiences. This is made even more striking by the wide differences in teaching responsibilities and work contexts.

This first section provides descriptions and analyses of participants' career stories related to career choice and teaching experiences. The quotations presented do not represent all comments about each topic, but care was taken to insure that they are representative. Where negative cases appeared, they are noted and sample quotations included. In the first example, the words of participants from each of the three groups: physical education specialists, other specialists, and classroom teachers will given in sequence as a means of highlighting the similarities among all participants, regardless of group.

Career Choice

The most common aspect of their personal lives that appeared to affect seventeen of these participants' careers, indeed happened at the very beginning, at conception. The fact that they were born with two X chromosomes, at a time when our society had very stereotyped expectations for male and female careers, had a significant effect not only on the choice to be a teacher, but also on the subject studied, and on how they initially perceived their careers.

Although they were good students, most participants felt that there were limited career choices available to them when they were making career decisions. It was interesting that in several cases they got better grades in high school than their spouses who went on into medicine or engineering, but did not see these fields as options for themselves. During that time there were a few women in this country beginning to break stereotyped role expectations, but for these participants nursing, teaching, and social work appeared to be the only options appropriate for women and they had chosen teaching.

> **Sally** (classroom) We had no role models growing up as far as female jobs. ... There were two things in my mind at that time we could be, nurses or teachers, as far as college education goes. We could be secretaries but we knew we didn't want to do that. We really felt like we were reaching. We were really going to do something. We were going to college and we could be nurses or teachers. . . .It just never, never entered our minds [to consider other fields]. I didn't know anybody that did those [things] that were women. Now, all the guys we went to school with pretty much went into engineering or business. They knew they could do that. It never occurred to us that we could probably do that too. ... I don't know if it was because of lack of experience on our parents' part. They just thought it was great that we were going to college. They didn't know that we could do something besides teach or be nurses, either.

Meg (physical education) I think I was still of the generation where women, who went to college, either became social workers or teachers or nurses and I knew I didn't want to become a nurse or a social worker. I sometimes think maybe because I was the first person to go to college [in my family] I was not shown the broad areas of choices that women have today. And I think I was just on the verge of [the time] when women really started to have [careers] open up for them.

Ann (other specialist-art) It was career day in high school and some guy said, 'Now you girls go into teaching, your job's waiting for you.' So we all went into teaching and we got our jobs. I can only think of one friend in high school who didn't go into teaching. It seems like all of us who went to college went into teaching.

Not only did participants chose teaching from a very limited set of choices, but the choices within teaching were also limited by the expectations of others.

Tammy I had wanted to be a band director. That was where I was headed. [A family friend] really discouraged me from being a band director, because I was a girl, and at that time women were not successful band directors. It took so much out of your life and some of them just didn't have the time, or I don't know what it was. But he was the one who sort of talked me into not going into band. I think, if I had really wanted to, I would have, but the idea of a music teacher just fascinated me. (other specialist)

Jane I really had wanted to be involved in science, but my family thought that wasn't very practical. I was Miss Goody Two-Shoes and I pretty much did what they thought was best for me. I really didn't have a lot of say-so in that [decision]. I guess I could have, if I'd just raised a terrible fuss, but it didn't seem worth it, and I liked English also. I loved literature and that was mainly what I was interested in, so I did that. (classroom)

That sex role expectations for women were predisposed toward teaching was not the only factor that influenced these women. In many cases they reported that they were usually model pupils who did what they were supposed to do, along with being good academically. This acquiescence was

common in other aspects of their lives besides school. This was exemplified by statements like Billye Jo's that, "Mother decided I should be a teacher so therefore I am a teacher. My mother was a very strong influence on me. I was one of these people who did what Mother said, so therefore I didn't quibble or argue or anything like that." And Kate's comment that, "I had wanted to study music when I was 18. I felt forced into studying Spanish, which I didn't want to study, because it sounded more practical to my mother who was paying my tuition."

Three of the participants indicated that they had always wanted to become teachers. They reported being attracted to the teaching role early in their lives. Letisha stated, "As a child, I always wanted to teach. I played with dolls. I lined them up, and I would get books, newspapers, whatever, and teach the dolls." This may represent a contradiction to the assertion that sex role stereotypes limited career choice, since these women had actively chosen teaching from an early age. Their attraction, however, could just as easily be attributed to the strong sex role modeling that they saw around them.

Even Tom showed the effects of such modeling on career choices with the statement, "My dad was a coach and so I thought that must be what I am going to do too." Tom, the only male participant, however, was encouraged by friends to explore a series of different occupations. Only one other participant mentioned being encouraged to consider other choices. She had been encouraged to become an optician like her father. "My dad was an optician. He wanted to me to go into optometry with him. He kept telling me 'Go to school, go to college, and we can go into business together', but I just never had any desire to do that. I always wanted to teach."

The question arises: are there alternate or additional explanations of career choice that challenge or modify the theme of sex role limitation? All

of the participants loved being with people, especially children. For several, teaching was a good career to have as a mother. They planned to work until their children were born and then stay home, possibly re-entering their careers later in life. The flat career structure in teaching encouraged this exit and re-entry pattern and so supported personal interest in being with their own children as well as professional interest in having a career.

One of the other general characteristics, that may have led these women to follow sex role expectations in choosing teaching as a career, was that they appeared to be compliant people who tried to work within the system to do the best job that they could. They were not, however, movers and shakers who challenged the system or championed causes. Therefore, following sex role stereotyped expectations rather than striking out and charting new territory appears consistent with other actions. Note Rachel's description of teachers' reaction to challenging the status quo in the following excerpt.

> **Rachel** We used to have to put a skirt on to [leave the gym] for lunch. Teachers were not allowed to wear pants suits to school. The principal was talking to us once at a meeting. He must have been talking about what the kids could wear, and I raised my hand and I said, 'Does that mean we can wear pants suits?' He hemmed and hawed and said, 'Well, I guess so.' So then the women got together and decided, 'OK, Wednesday was going to be the day' because we just couldn't do it on our own. It was wild.

At first reading the issue of dress may appear to be a trivial issue, but in fact it exemplifies the willingness of teachers to act on sanctioned change and yet their hesitancy at being the leaders of that change. In addition, what women wear is not a trivial factor when it comes to their acceptance and status in society. Breaking the stereotype of skirts and dresses, as the only really appropriate apparel for women, is still an issue in our society 20 years

after this incident. The incident does, however, support the contention that teachers do not tend to be people who are comfortable stepping out and forging new trails.

Rather than striking out on their own, championing a cause, teachers are more often compliant and try to do the best they can with the situation they are given. This proposition is supported by the descriptions which participants provided of the role labeled "citizenship" on their rainbow of life. The most common response was that they were concerned citizens who tried to keep up with current affairs and always tried to vote responsibly, but rarely got involved in championing any particular cause. Notice the regularity of the following typical responses.

> **Kristin** I keep up. I know what is going on in the world, but I am not particularly active in any way other than to be informed.

> **Billye Jo** Now as far as "citizen", I'm not sure. I have always been an American citizen. I have always taken part in elections and so forth, but I have not been overly active in any demonstrations or anything like that. [I am a] kind of a quiet person.

> **Meg** My citizen band is not very dark. I don't join a lot of civic committees. I try to keep well abreast of the political situation in the country. I try to be an informed citizen, to know what is going on. I try to make sure my children are aware of what is going on, but as far as working in a certain area, I don't do that.

There were three exceptions in the data to the assertion that participants did not challenge the system or champion causes. Bea had a role model for political activism in her father. He had championed education for his children, demanding they be allowed to attend high school. Until then the Hispanic children in her community were only educated through the sixth grade because there was only one high school and it was for whites only.

Bea married a political activist and became actively involved in championing causes through his work in the community.

> **Bea** He said, 'Come on with me because you are female and we are talking to women in their backyards.' ... His thing was the poverty. 'We don't have the money, we have the poverty people. Let's all get together and let's fight for this.' That was an exciting time for me and an exciting time for both of us. It was like 'if they don't listen to us one at a time, then we'll go in the masses.' . . . So we went to the city council and got the yards cleaned up. It was a real success. The next thing was education. He knew how interested I was in education, so he said, 'Well let's hit this one ... let's hit this one....'

She indicated, as did another teacher, that it had been very difficult to get teachers to speak out about injustices in education because they were afraid that they would lose their jobs. She wondered why she had not worried about that.

> **Bea** We asked the teachers from Higgins to go, but they did not want to go. They were scared because at that time you just couldn't say anything against your principal. Principals at that time were almighty powerful.... I remember that school board meeting. I was sitting in the front and [a school board member] said 'We need to hear from some of you teachers', and I looked at him and said, 'Mr. Carson....' You see at the time I wasn't even scared of losing my job. I don't know why; I just knew Larry was going to take care of me forever....The teachers did get up. One of them got up crying and she said, ' I'm scared and I know I am probably going to get fired, but I am going to tell you what is going on over there....'

Obviously some teachers kept quiet because they were afraid of retribution. Bea, who enjoyed her activist roles, became overwhelmed with the number of causes to address and at the time of her divorce felt that she had to give up her activisim to attend to her five children.

Kate also found it difficult to get teachers to take a public stand to change the status quo.

Kate I was getting more involved with my teacher organizations. They have a group [to help] if you are in trouble about your rights. They have people right there getting innocent people out of [trouble] and [they] will come and help you. So I was having to call. [The teachers were saying] 'We are in trouble. This principal needs to get out. What do we do?' Suddenly [I was the one] to come to if the principal was acting up.... It was an eye-opener for me. I had a lot of people coming to me telling me all these injustices that were going on, but when it came to putting it down on paper and signing, I got left out on a limb. You know the old rose-colored glasses immediately shattered because I thought they were going to really rally around me; you know get in there and get this man out.... It was very frustrating.

Even Rachel, who was one of the three most politically active teachers, described herself as being on the conservative end of the political spectrum compared to the community around her.

Rachel The woman who was in charge quit in the middle of the year and they asked me to finish up the school year as head of the Education Association. That was the year the teachers in Chicago went out on strike and, because I was the head of [the Education Association], I was the building captain of the strike. We were actually out on picket lines for all those things -- better pay, smaller classes, and all that stuff. It was pretty vicious.... In Chicago, it was not such a big deal because my mother is extremely radical left. She came from a socialist movement and my stepfather was a card-carrying Communist. They were both extremely radical, and what I was doing was just left, liberal left. Compared to them I was really square. Compared to my friends in Champaign at the time, '70-'74, we were very square.

As Sarah indicated, teachers do have strong opinions about what is going on, but are sometimes hesitant to speak out and are not encouraged to do so by the system. She felt her life experiences were important in this regard.

Sarah They don't like people that make waves, and I make a few. I don't make many because I am not a hostile person, but I think you have to talk about it. I have several friends who feel exactly the way I do. It's probably my age and it's probably my life experiences that make me [speak out]. I don't really care if

> they like what I think. I would like them to listen to me. Maybe they would believe that, when I speak about frustrations in my classroom, I am speaking for others as well as myself. I am not a troublemaker. I am not carrying a banner and tramping around the school, but I am a team leader so I have an opportunity in those meetings to express my feelings about things.

As indicated throughout this analysis the division between teachers' personal and professional lives is not rigid and certainly is permeable. The passion that comes with deep involvement in social issues, for example, is difficult to keep in the closet all day at school. Rachel provided some insight into one reason this might make teachers reticent to be active politically outside of school. Because of the strength of teachers as role models for children, she felt it was unethical to present her political views to impressionable students.

> **Rachel** As a teacher I do not bring it up usually, But if kids bring it up, I will talk [about] it. Normally I try to keep politics out of school. I just don't think it is savvy with such young children unless you hear something and can use it as a teachable moment, but I wouldn't bring it up. I just don't think it is really ethical.

The line between allowing students to view a teacher as an authentic individual with strong personal beliefs and commitments, and appearing to advocate the adoption of those beliefs is difficult to define, particularly when dealing with impressionable students. Rather than having to struggle with separating their home and school lives in order to deal with this ethical concern some teachers may have found it easier just to not get involved in controversial issues. The heavy time requirements of teaching serve to reinforce this choice.

Participants indicated in many ways that they loved their work but had chosen it from a very limited set of career options. They had followed the status quo and gone into one of the three careers available to women at the

time they were making that decision. Although they now recognized a wider range of options, and were attracted to some, they enjoyed their work and were unwilling to give up the time teaching provided for being with their own children. It could be said that remaining in teaching was another example of staying with the status quo and being unwilling to take risks or step out on their own. It also provides additional evidence that teachers tend to do the best they can with what they have, rather than try to change the basic situation. From hearing their stories, I have come to believe that these teachers highly valued the work they did, enjoyed their daily experiences, and fundamentally valued the family-centered lifestyle teaching provided.

Teaching Experiences

Having discussed participants' choices to become teachers we are now ready to consider ways in which teaching and career decisions influenced participants' lives. The section will begin with descriptions of common reactions related to the school environment and its personnel. Following this are discussions of career pathways, career stages, and day-to-day experiences.

Career States

As noted in my earlier review of teachers' career stages (Lambdin, 1988b), some descriptions in the literature specifically address factors that were clearly stage-like, that is, showing evidence of steps in a developmental progression. Other factors appeared to be state-like, that is showing characteristics of particular circumstances, not necessarily related to any ordered sequence.

For example, a teacher's confidence in the ability to control the class increases as a result of experience and learning. Once a new level of confidence is reached, the individual does not usually lose confidence in the ability to deal with a class even when faced with more difficult class groups. Change is generally confined to improvement. This demonstrates the essence of stage-like factors.

Conversely, job satisfaction is a state that may vary with the time of year, facilities available, quality of the administration, or needs of the group of students being taught. Such states, unlike career stages, do not represent specific development in a particular direction. Instead, individuals experience the particular state when the conditions are right for it and may experience the same state at several different times during their careers. Participants described states related to working conditions that had occurred periodically in their careers. Enthusiasm or discouragement often resulted from the conditions under which they were working rather than from a progression in learning on their part. These states strongly affected the teachers' personal lives because of the stress or satisfaction involved.

School Setting

Teaching situations ran the whole gamut from very supportive places to work with competent colleagues to dismal, depressing situations where the daily trials were more than a teacher could bear. These differences appeared to be based on a number of factors in the school setting including quality of colleagues, quality of administration, level of children's needs, and level of parental involvement. The interaction of these factors also was important. Higher-SES schools had parents that pushed more and also provided more resources. In the lower-SES schools, in addition to sometimes being

frightening places themselves, there was the emotional drain of knowing that if children did not get a particular learning experience at school, they probably would not get it at all. As Kate stated, "I want my kids to shine and I want them to have every possible opportunity to experience this. We have a population which, if they don't get it through school, they probably will not get it anywhere else in their lives." Regardless of the states caused by workplace conditions, at certain times all teachers described an air of excitement about their work that came from their enthusiasm for developing new ways of teaching.

Colleagues. The most common state described was the excitement and enthusiasm generated when working with competent colleagues. Learning from and interacting with excellent colleagues was a delight for all teachers. Comments like, "They had that fire in their voices, that sparkle in their eyes. There was something in them that just sparked me and I knew I really wanted to be in teaching" were common. Association with excellent colleagues was mentioned more often by classroom teachers than by specialists who were more isolated from others with similar interests, but it was experienced and valued by all. In these situations, teachers felt confident and successful.

> **Sally** At that point, we emerged as very strong leaders in the school.... The rest of the school would look and we were always having a good time. We were always together because it took us all week to do these things. We were close and we were enjoying what we were doing. The principal liked us because we did anything that needed to be done. If she needed [something] extra, we always did it. That was just the kind of people we were. We got all kinds of plaques from the district. We got 100% mastery scores on TEAMS tests.

Kate I love the school. I love the teachers. They are highly dedicated. Nobody ever believes me until they have worked with these teachers. They are an exceptional group of teachers. They are nurturers. They are good teachers. They put in hours. They listen to each other. The teachers work together to make sure all the kids' needs are being met. I know that does not happen in all schools. It is really nice. We don't have very many transfers from our school and I think that is a sign of that positive nurturing environment. I just love it. I hope I never have to leave because I am very happy here with these teachers.

Administration. In contrast to the delight and enthusiasm found in working with excellent colleagues, frustration and dissatisfaction was described as the result of working for poor administrations. The principal was considered a very important element of the workplace.

Kate We had a principal who was a very nice man, but never should have been principal, [he] just did not have leadership [skills]. The school was falling apart. We had been known in the past for [being a] good school with good kids. This guy came in and the school went down. Kids were fighting. We were having bloody noses. We had kids lying. You always have a little bit, but this was huge. If you sent them to the principal, they would come back saying, 'He's not going to do anything.' They would come back with a lollipop. We were all [thinking], 'I thought this only happened in the movies'. So teachers were complaining. They were fighting. They were fussing. It was awful. . . .

The quality of the administration also affected the quality of the other conditions in the school. Poor leadership usually resulted in poor working conditions.

Tammy We had a principal that did not want to face anything. When you came in one door, he went out the other. He was a very, very poor principal. We had street people coming in off the streets. A guy came in my room one day wanting to demonstrate. I had no idea what he wanted to demonstrate. He was higher than a kite on something. He had no idea where he really was, what he was doing. It was an experience. .. .I had [electrical outlets] in the floor. The kids would stick pencils [in] and short out the circuits. It was bad.

Conversely, a good principal, as Kate indicated, was very highly valued "We have a different principal now who is a strong leader and backs us. It is really important to have a good principal."

> **Sarah** She was really inspirational. I wonder sometimes how she managed to teach us as much as she did without an instrument with 72 criteria on which to evaluate us. I never saw her write a written evaluation in my classroom, ever, and yet she knew me well. She knew my strengths. I can remember subtle things, like, 'Maybe next time you might try this. I found that works well.' Very subtle guide. But it really was probably the most positive teaching experience I ever had, those first few years.

Unfortunately, the general description was that the lower-SES schools that had students with the most problems often also had weak principals, or that the good ones, like the good teachers, would not last.

> **Sarah** He is carrying such a load. He won't last. I give him maybe one more year and he will go someplace else because they will snap him up. He is bright, well educated and black, and a good principal. I mean, he can only carry the burden so long, and he can't make the changes he would like to make. Teachers quit on him right and left when he went in there and tried to upgrade teaching for the sake of the children.

Level of Children's Needs. In situations where the needs of the children were great, these teachers found the resources often were very limited.

> **Sarah** I think there are great injustices here in this town. When I substituted, I would go to my son's first-grade teacher crying. Granted, I am kind of over-emotional, and I was probably premenopausal, but it just tore my heart the way I had to send children out into the cold. I got into trouble for using the strings out of the bead-stringing center, in a kindergarten class I subbed in, to lace up a child's shoe. A little girl with cigarette burns all over her legs, little saddle shoes with no laces, no socks, 28 degrees and sleet. Her sister took the coat off her and I said 'Why did you take Mary's coat off?' The child said, 'It was my coat

first, and it's cold'.... Okay, if you're teaching in that kind of a school, you're up against stuff we don't even think about where I am.... It's totally different. I think teachers who teach in those schools ought to be subsidized. They don't have the materials we have, they don't.

Different settings have different children, and this also has a strong effect on both teaching and personal satisfaction.

Rachel It was rougher teaching. [It has difficult] just to get the kids quiet enough to focus and attend to whatever you were trying to teach them. All the teachers were busy with that. At Higgins the children are more inclined to sit there with their legs crossed looking up at you saying, 'Teach me.' So I have a lot more emotional room left over to support other teachers and do other kinds of things because your whole [time] isn't [spent] being worried about discipline and how they're going to hit each other.

Level of Parental Involvement. Much like the needs of children, the various forms of parental involvement affect the teaching setting and consequently the teacher's daily life. When low involvement was a problem it was often coupled with other difficult factors, such as high student need and lack of resources.

Sarah It makes my heart bleed for those children because their needs are so great. It is a totally different culture. For instance, when we have a PTA meeting or a program we are inundated with parents. I mean we had close to 1,000 on Back to School Night. My friend [in the poor school] had two parents come to Back-to-School Night.

High parental involvement, however, can have its own problems as well. High involvement means that there always is a push to improve, but it also can mean high stress.

Sarah In our school it is very important to keep parents happy because they are troublemakers. They go to the superintendent and they do all kinds of things. I think that is helpful, but it is annoying to be constantly challenged. We were talking about it the other day. We ought to quit teaching and publish our notes.

> For instance, on my team, we get three-, four- and five-page notes. They are almost always critical, telling us what we should know about this particular child in this particular instance. [Asking] why did we do thus and so?

Level of parental involvement was not tied only to the workplace, but varied across time even in the same settings.

> **Jane** I have really seen a tremendous change in society. When I first came here, I think the parents were really interested and involved in the school. Then we had this boom in the economy and everybody started making money, and going out and about, and the kids really lost. The parents were not interested so much in education anymore. They were pretty hostile about a lot of things like homework and extra projects. They really didn't have time to deal with those things, and the children did not have the support from home that they needed.

A number of teachers mentioned changes in parents' attitudes toward phone calls home. Some years they had experienced a feeling of support when they tried to get the parent involved. Other years or in different communities, they reported the parent would immediately side with the child rather than the desired reply of, "Oh, well, I'll talk to the child and see what I can do to help you out."

Support for Professional Development. Support for professional development is an important factor in a school setting. In one school in particular, the private school, all three participants spoke in glowing terms of the professional support given to teachers. Although other participants described times when they had great colleagues or a wonderful principal, none of them mentioned administrative support so often nor so enthusiastically. The private school teachers clearly believed that school leadership was the key to their ability to be effective teachers. These teachers felt that the autonomy provided them said, "We respect your judgement and know you will provide a good program" and teachers in their school rose to

the occasion. In addition, they valued the support given professional development activities not only for the content gained, but also for the personal relationships developed. Attending workshops and conferences together built personal ties as well as providing professional enrichment. These personal ties also had professional benefits.

> **Sharon** I think the indirect benefit comes from when people have high morale. They are more willing to be open to other people's ideas. They are more willing to try things. If I have some scheme that I want to start, like this peer-teaching between second-grade and first-grade, and I have tight rapport with the first-grade teachers, they are much more likely to allow us to experiment and try it than if you do your thing and I do my thing and we don't really get together and mix too much.

Although work settings have been described here as conditions that temporarily affect states of satisfaction and energy for teaching, there was evidence that to some extent these experiences eventually did change people's views of the world.

> **Sarah.** . When I began substituting and going into lots of different schools, my feeling of hope for education as a whole definitely took a plunge. I was put in situations with children who had tremendous physical and emotional needs that were not being met and the school did not know how to meet them. It did not have the wherewithal to do so. I [had seen education] as a panacea. It was a solution to all the world's problems. As I went further along in my career and I began to see that within even the little microcosm that I was a part of, power was important, money was important, things were important. I think I probably became a little more disillusioned.

Excitement and Enthusiasm for Projects

In addition to the enthusiastic and discouraged states resulting from various workplace conditions, there is one additional state which was described periodically. That was personal excitement, usually about a specific project or idea. Although at times it was tied to working with colleagues,

excitement often seemed more connected to events in the classroom and the stimulation of solving instructional problems. This was a common state during the early exploratory stage of the career cycle, but for some it returned periodically throughout their teaching years, regardless of the conditions in which they were teaching.

> **Tammy** As soon as school hits, I get so excited. I start figuring out ways to do things, some ways that I have never done before. I get excited about it. I get to where I can't sleep because I think of things to do at night. That is when my husband doesn't understand me, getting that excited about [teaching] something.

Almost all of the participants in this study experienced a variety of teaching conditions that produced predictable states of enthusiasm or discouragement. Quality of colleagues and administrators, the level of children's needs, level of parental involvement, and support for professional development all interacted to produce state-like conditions. The experience of finding fresh enthusiasm for new ways to teach can occur despite a difficult context and the negative states it can inspire. Regardless of the settings, these teachers were active professionals, developing curriculum to address the needs of their students, cleaning rooms so they would have more pleasant surroundings, and initiating new projects to address specific problems. Positive conditions did provide increased satisfaction and enthusiasm for teaching, so it is not surprising that although each individual experienced a variety of settings, career patterns generally reflected movements toward the better teaching settings.

Career Pathways

As described above, participants in this study had taught in a variety of schools during their careers. Early in their careers, since they had little

seniority, they often had to accept temporary positions or were terminated due to budget cuts or changes in student-enrollment patterns. In about half the job changes, however, it was the teacher's choice, as in the circumstance of moving because of a spouse's job opportunities or dropping out to care for their own children.

Early Teaching

Few felt prepared for their first teaching jobs, but perhaps the most absurd situation belonged to a 17-year-old nun who entered the convent and found herself in the classroom two months later.

> **Judy** I was teaching second grade, or at least I was in a second grade classroom. The nun that had (the first grade), was perfectly wonderful and I wish she had been around to help me. I have never forgiven her for this, but she was roller-skating and fell and broke her hip and I inherited her first grade knowing absolutely nothing about first grade. So I had first- and second-grade. I had 54 children and it was my first year teaching, so I was a glorified babysitter for all practical purposes.... The next year I went back into a classroom and I had 70 third-graders. I did such a good job with them that the next year they were going to send me to the fourth grade and I would have had 82, but . . .

Some started off in better situations and others in poorer, but almost all experienced difficult teaching situations at some time in their first few years. Perhaps the most poignant theme that appeared in these data was that, in most cases, earlier teaching jobs, when participants had the fewest skills, were also in the schools with the most problems. They reported struggling valiantly with their own inadequacies and the difficulties of the system.

> **Kristin** I had applied at several places, trying to get a job, and I was to the point by July that I thought, 'Well I'll just be a homemaker for a little while longer'. I got a call the beginning of August to come and interview for a job. It was at what they called the Guidance Center. The principal showed me around. It was their alternative school. I knew nothing about it; there I

was green around the gills, just graduated from college. He made it sound like it would be the perfect situation. My title would be reading specialist. He was trying to hire me and another girl who had just graduated from college and we would be teaching kids who ranged in grade level from 6th through 12th grade.

We accepted the jobs. The first day of school the kids walked in and we found out we had the kids who had been suspended from their home schools; the kids who were kicked out of high school; the kids who were suspended from all the middle schools; we had the pregnant girls, surfers, the druggies, --those were the kids that came to me for reading. I did not have any children that read above a third grade level. I had some seniors who had no reading skills. I just went into total shock. I kept thinking, 'Here my degree is in elementary ed.' That year was like a nightmare. We all got threats that they would beat us up or slash our tires all the time from these kids; that was just the way they were. I was just so naive. I never dreamed that teaching would be that way. I thought if this is what it is all about, I don't want it.

In the majority of cases the women had followed their spouses' career moves, finding teaching jobs when possible in each new town where they were located. This often meant substituting or accepting difficult assignments since they were entering with little seniority.

School changes within the same geographic area, however, generally had moved teachers to better teaching situations as they gained experience and seniority. Very few teachers had been lucky enough to spend their whole careers in strong, supportive school environments. As time went on and they had some choice in the situation, they moved to or stayed in better schools where they enjoyed interactions with principals and other teachers whom they respected, and who helped them grow. The change to better schools was not always linear. Many teachers moved back and forth from good situations to more difficult situations especially early in their careers.

The general trend, however, was toward better situations until they found one where they could be successful and could enjoy and respect their colleagues and the administration.

Time Out to Have Children

Most participants did take at least some time out from teaching to raise their children, yet had returned. As Murnane & Olsen (1987) pointed out, the use of statistics on the number of teachers leaving a school district to study attrition rates in teaching certainly does not provide an accurate picture of careers in teaching. Almost every participant in this study moved between school districts as well as dropping out and re-entering some time in their career. These participants' descriptions of their lives reflected Biklen's (1986) characterization of teacher/mothers' description of their teaching careers as "I have always worked". That is, they saw their child rearing as an extension of their teaching and their professional development. Sally stated, "I continued to teach with the exception of 2 years when I stayed home each year with my children, but for the most part I still consider the fact that I have worked all that time." In many cases the time spent out of the school was not seen as a break in their career and certainly did not indicate any lack of commitment. If anything it indicated a very strong commitment to children. In Sandy's words, "I knew that raising children was the most important job I could do.... I knew I would go back so it wasn't like I'd given [my career] up forever.

Moving related change, exit/re-entry and better-school bound are three phrases that describe the career pathways of these teachers. Although naive and inexperienced early in their careers, they made the best of their situations, giving it their all. They did, however, usually escape to more acceptable situations, and only a few even identified as a problem a system that allows

young inexperienced teachers to serve in the most difficult of teaching situations.

As participants matured as people and gained seniority, most moved into better teaching situations. This did not in all cases mean high-SES schools, but rather schools where there was a good administration and a chance for teaching success. When they found these schools, they were happy and wanted to stay there forever. As Tammy said, "It's wonderful. And I will probably just stay til I die with my boots on."

This career movement, of course, means that the best schools often get teachers who have reached career stages where they feel and are professionally competent, while the poorest schools have a revolving door through which pass teachers with beginning skills. The next section will leave the discussion of specific teaching situations, and review what teachers said about the stages of professional growth they had experienced.

Career Stages

Participants related in substantial detail their own experience with the teachers' career stages described in professional literature -- surviving, growing, competent, stable and sometimes stagnant. (Burden, 1981; Burke et al., 1987; Newman, 1978).

Surviving

Most participants started scared and inexperienced, wanting desperately to be successful. Following closely after this initial panic, they described moving into an exploring stage where they tried out new ideas, gathered materials, and learned entire new approaches to their work.

Ann We know that first stage, the first half, is a survival stage. It was a struggle, testing myself and not feeling successful, and being frustrated, and basically not feeling good about what I was doing. After that it was kind of exciting to try things.

Colleagues during those first years were considered very influential.

Sharon When I started working, I sort of viewed myself as an apprentice and I feel like I learned more about my profession, and about being a worker, that first semester than I did in the four years of being an undergraduate. ... If I had started work at some other school, my whole life would be different, in terms of myself as a teacher. I might not think the way I think about competition or activity level or any of the things I learned from my first colleague.

Growing

Understanding that teaching and learning are often related, but not synonymous, occurred in the next stage.

Billye Jo Then there is the stage that you think, 'Well, I told you that; can't you understand?... and suddenly you realize 'No, they didn't understand. Back off and do it again.' So that would be a stage when you suddenly realize that just because you are a teacher and just because you've said it, that doesn't mean they have learned it at all. That is sort of a rude awakening.

This was a time of searching and experimenting with different materials and approaches. As Kate said, "it was an experimental stage [where you ask], 'does this work? Does that work?'"

Ann [This period] involved finding projects and testing them out. [There was] a lot of trial and error the first few years because you try out a project with a certain group and [find it is] too hard for them and decide 'I'll never to that again'. You had to kind of give yourself permission to try things that might not work out. Sometimes I'd go in thinking I was prepared and I wasn't and it would be disastrous. I learned a lot from just doing. ... There was a lot more guess work involved and [more] preparation, but there was [also] a kind of excitement that I probably don't have anymore.

For many, it was a time of trying out approaches and deciding what was right for them.

> **Sally** The second year I relied a lot on an older teacher who was next door to me. She would give me lots of advice on how to do things. I would try out what she said and then I'd think well, 'maybe someting else would work better for me.' I thought lots of things she did were great, but then I had to do my own. I had to experiment a lot and find out what was best for me.
>
> **Sharon** It was a really exciting, stimulating time. I thought, 'yeah there are better ways to do this and she's doing them. This is a better way to do it." So that was a really exciting period.

This period gave way to a more comfortable period in which teachers felt they finally knew what they were doing and each day was not a new experiment.

Competent, Stable, Stagnant

A stable and competent stage followed where they felt successful and skilled. This sometimes ended with concerns about complacency or stagnation which led to a search for more education, or new areas of responsibility within the school. Although these stages are sometimes identified separately in the literature (Burke et al., 1987) teachers who talked about all three almost did so in a single breath.

> **Ann** I think [the] next stage was one of a kind of comfort zone where things evened out and I kind of developed a pattern, just a routine of doing things. It felt good to be good without feeling hassled. ...[but], I think that what prompted me (to go back to school), was that comfort zone. I felt like I was kind of stagnating.
>
> **Kate** I was pulling out the same old lessons. I did pull out the ones that worked, but I was finding myself saying, 'Oh, this is easy'. I was taking the easy way out. 'I know how to teach this, I don't [need] much time planning it.' I was on automatic and I was starting to feel robotic. The lessons worked, but I was not

> growing musically, and I felt my kids were starting to look bored. They would get the glassy-eyed look in their eyes and I would think, 'Uh-oh, wrong. Can't make it easy for Kate. It has got to be fire in their eyes!'....

All the teachers described a subtle shift over the course of their careers, from thinking mostly in terms of classes of children to thinking mostly in terms of individuals. Comments like "I was not seeing the individual for the broad picture" were common.

A number of the most experienced teachers described an additional stage beyond those typically mentioned in the literature: that of new wisdom. They felt that they had finally come to a depth of understanding of their own values, and felt a quiet confidence that they were moving children in the direction they wanted. They indicated that where once they used to be impatient, wanting things to happen more quickly, and wishing that everyone would learn things at the same time, now they were more content to take children where they were and work with them as long as it took.

> **Billye Jo** Now, I guess, it is a patience and a kind of wisdom . You think, 'Well okay, we'll go through it [again] today.' There was a time when I wanted it [done] today. 'We will do it today and then we'll forget about it; we'll wrap it up in a package and it will be done and I can go on to something else.' At this point I know that it is ongoing, you keep reverting back, and you keep re-doing.

Listening to these participants increased my admiration for the literature on career stages. The divisions made and terms used by these teachers to describe the survival, growing, and competent stages matched very closely the ones used in the literature. On only a few occasions did these teachers' descriptions vary from those found in the literature. Although there were several teachers who were over age 50, for instance, they still spoke enthusiastically about their teaching and spoke only in passing about winding down their careers or about retirement.

Day-to-Day Experience

The primary reward in teaching mentioned by all these teachers was the joy of seeing children learn and of just being with children. Participants enjoyed the company of children and treasured the love that children showed for them. As Sandy said, "The love those children have for you makes you feel so good." Their goals for students went beyond learning the content to an enjoyment of learning that would make children want to continue. One way of doing this was to bring their personal interests into the classroom so students would see them excited about learning. The cost of such intense, demanding engagement, however, was high. By the end of the year, teachers were exhausted and used the summer months to recuperate and regroup before the next year.

Watching Children Learn

Greater even than their own delight in receiving hugs and love from the children was the passion and enthusiasm expressed by the participants when describing the experience of helping a child learn. Meg echoed the feelings of many teachers with her statements,

> **Meg** I like to see kids be successful and you can see the look on their faces when they are successful. They know they can do something. I think that gives them a big boost of self-confidence. I really feel that I can make most children successful in my class.

Many referred to the thrill of "seeing the lightbulb turn on." Kate describes the feeling.

> **Kate** All I know is that I like being with children and I like music. I love to see children get that lightbulb turned on. It is like this little lightbulb clicks on and they have this smile on their faces. Just seeing the excitement in their eyes or just their facial expressions of, 'Oh! I've finally gotten it' is worth more

> than a month's paycheck. It is just so exciting to see a child really learn something. There are days when I think, 'Am I really getting anything across?' Just when I think, 'What am I doing? I'm not reaching one little child.' BOING! A smile, or you can see that little light flicker in their eyes, and you go, 'That's it! That is why I am here.'

Along with the daily reward of seeing light bulbs shine in the darkness is a long-term desire to make a difference in a child's life. For many teachers, the satisfaction of having just one or two students a year come back to visit is a major reward that keeps them motivated. Although the form of the feedback was often a fourteen-year-old standing outside the classroom door to say a shy "Hi" or a "Say heeeyyyy miss j., I am glad you made me do that", it was deeply felt by these teachers. Jane described it as the feeling "That you are part of the next generation, and that what you say may have some influence on how the world is run . . ." Nancy suggested that the mere fact that they came back, said, "I enjoyed your class; we had fun and you were important in my life". As Tammy noted, "It really makes you think, 'Gee, I really did have an impact on somebody.' Maybe just a little one, but it was there. And in not many professions you can say that."

> **Letisha** I have seen a lot of things go on in children's lives that [let me] know that I have made a difference. It is hard to graduate. It is very hard. If you graduate, you have done something. I had a kid call me about three weeks ago, a student I had 12 years ago. He called to let me know how he was doing. He's graduating. That makes me feel good because a lot of people do not see the value of first grade, second grade, but hey, if you don't get it there, you are not going to get it.

For the specialists, as will be discussed in more detail later, there is a special long-term relationship. As Tom noted, "The kids that are fifth-graders here this year, I have had since they were kindergartners, the year I came." For classroom teachers there is a briefer, but more intense relationship

resulting from individuals spending six hours a day together for a year. Both situations result in relationships that are important to teachers.

Goals for Students

The participants also talked about goals they had for their students' learning. It was particularly interesting that, although they eagerly described the joy of watching the lightbulbs go on, their goal was that students enjoy the process, as well as develop knowledge or skills, so that they would want to continue to learn. This was true in the classroom as well as in the special areas.

> **Meg . . .**As far as my philosophy, I love to teach skills. I like to have kids learn things they can do the rest of their lives. I want them to be able to do them well, but I want to make sure they can find some area that they like to do, that will stay with them the rest of their lives. ... I hope they enjoy activity. I hope they learn specific skills and to be aware of their body, what's going on with their body when they are physically active. 'What does that say to you? Is that a good thing? Is that a bad thing? Does it make you feel good enough that you'd want to do it in three or four years? Would you like to keep going with this? Do you feel good enough that you want to make it a part of your life?'
>
> **Nancy** I am not trying to make great performers. My purpose is to give them a good taste for it and hope they remember areas that they can enjoy. Music will be with them for the rest of their lives.
>
> **Kristin** My goal every year is to make school enjoyable. I want the kids to love being here. I want them to enjoy what they're doing and, at the same time, be learning. I want them to be happy and that is my main big goal.

Exhaustion

Life as a teacher was not all roses, however. The exhaustion that resulted from teaching often permeated other roles, such as parent or partner.

In few other occupations are professionals expected to deal with such large numbers of people at once, for such long periods of time. This intense professional engagement during the school year resulted in an intense valuing of the extended time away from teaching during the summer. Summer vacations were identified as times of rejuvenation and recovery from the emotional strain of the daily guidance of so many young children.

> **Jane** During the time that we are actually teaching, I get up every morning at 5:00 and I am up here by 7:30. Most afternoons I don't leave until 4:00 or 4:30, so I have been here in the classroom a full day and I'm not sitting down. It's an emotional experience, you're constantly 'on stage' so to speak. We do have off-times, where we plan; but, when you're actually teaching, there's not time that you are just sitting around. ...I put in a [lot] of time during the school year and then have to come and work in the summer or I can't keep up with what has to be done. Although I am off in the summer, I work up here at least a month and half of the summer. But it is at a different pace and in a different way and so we rejuvenate ourselves. When I come back in the fall, I am fresh and ready to deal with it. If I had to start the next day after school was out, start over again teaching, I would not be able to do that. You really get tremendous burnout by the end of the semester, particularly if you have as hard a class as I did last year. I was totally worn out.

Bringing Experiences to the Classroom

Activities in which teachers were involved in outside of school enriched teachers' own experiences and also enriched the classroom. As mentioned earlier, Rachel often used music from the opera she was singing in during the warmup time in her class and invited her Israeli folk dance group to perform for her students. Summer vacation opportunities were also used to enrich the classroom.

> **Sarah** That is what makes an interesting teacher. When I was growing up, one of the things I loved was hearing my teachers tell me about where they had gone in the summer. They went

> to all these exciting places I would probably never see. South America, Europe, and we would hear these exciting things and we would find them on the map. I remember one teacher came back and she had been in the Netherlands. We made a covered bed and, if you were really good, you got to read in the covered bed. I mean, I could not wait to get all my work done so I could climb up there in that covered bed. And it was all blue and white and filled with stuff she brought back from Holland.

As Jane indicated, "Almost every experience you have in the summertime, gives you something that you can bring back to your classroom."

In examining the description of experiences common to many of these teachers, it becomes clear that personal and professional lives are inextricably intertwined. What it means to be a teacher is as much related to the person you are as it is to the professional skills possessed. The reverse is also true. Being a teacher involves not only work in the school, but that work permeates home life as well.

As indicated by the long hours teachers spend on their work and the emotional drain of being responsible for the growth of children, often in very difficult circumstances, the teacher's life is not an easy one. It certainly is not so easy as it often looks from an outside perspective. For these participants, however, the rewards of turning on the lightbulb for a child and perhaps making a difference in that child's life were important. Thus far, this chapter has provided descriptions of teachers' lives as captured in the short biographies, discussions of their choices to go into teaching, and accounts of common teaching experiences. The next section presents common ways, both negative and positive, that participants' personal lives and careers have interacted.

Personal Life/Career Interactions

This section presents specific themes related to the interaction of teachers' personal lives and careers. Although almost every aspect of the participants' lives influenced their teaching in some way, there were a number of areas where common negative and positive interactions were described very specifically by many of the participants. The next two sections report these negative and positive interactions as described by the participants.

Negative Interactions Between Personal Lives and Careers

The three main ways that teaching careers negatively interacted with participants' personal lives included: workload spillover into home life, lack of flexibility in time during the day, and financial frustrations. Negative life influences on teaching were related to a decreased ability to function well during traumatic life episodes. Each of these interactions will be discussed in turn.

Work Spillover into Home Life

One of the differences that every participant identified between their lives and those of their friends who were not teachers was the amount of work taken home. Classroom teachers did more grading and specialists did more out-of-class special program preparation, but both reported spending a good deal of their time, outside of school hours and during the summer, on work related to their jobs. Although this extra time was not required time, teachers felt they needed it to do quality work

> **Billye Jo** [Teaching] has taken a lot away from my personal life. It takes a lot of time. I don't just work from 7:30 until 3:30. I'm usually there at 7:00 and I'm rarely home before 5. When I do go home, I take stuff home to do. Does anybody make me do it?

No, but I feel that the kids need what I'm doing, and so therefore I do it. That's just my way of trying to establish and carry on the program to the best level I can.

When I first started, people said you need to leave school at school and take care of your personal life, [but] I have never been able to do that. I can't sort it out because if I don't take care of it at home, when I get to school tomorrow morning, it's a mess!

Jane I do a lot of grading and I can't think of a way to get out of it and do a good job. I grade at school some, but almost every evening I grade one to two hours. During the time that we're actually teaching, I get up every morning at 5:00 and I'm up here by 7:30. Most afternoons I don't leave until 4:00 or 4:30. Sometimes I come here on weekends. At the end of the grading period I spend a whole weekend doing report cards and getting things together.

Tammy My husband, for example, leaves that building at 4:30. In fact, he's not allowed to take anything out of the building, ever. Every once in a while he'll go back on Saturdays, but he's paid time and a half for that. When we first got married, he really had a hard time understanding why I had to bring things home.

As Billye Jo expressed, one of the frustrating things about this work is that, "The public doesn't know the time we spend. They think when you walk [away] you're done; and you're not done, you're never done." Tammy echoed these feelings.

> **Tammy** Most people don't know how much time we put into it. I was going to go over to [a friend's] house and I said, 'I'll come over to your house and then I have to go to school.' She said, 'You mean, you go back on Saturdays?' She was just amazed. 'I never knew teachers worked on Saturdays.'

But it wasn't only the time spent on work outside of school that teachers mentioned as a spillover into their lives. They also stated many times over that, even when they weren't actively doing school work, they were thinking about it.

Bea They can walk out of their offices and their jobs and leave it there. To me, in teaching, you can't. You carry it with you; it's crazy. I can go to K-mart and I'll think, 'Oh I've got to get all these balls for these kids, aren't these beach balls looking wonderful?'. Anywhere you go with any teacher, that's the line of thinking. 'Don't you think my class would love this?, Hey, did you know I found this praying mantis. Won't it be great for my class!'

Although more than half the participants reported that their spouses and families were supportive of their work, many described home frictions that occurred because of this spillover. Letisha even separated from her husband at one point with one of the major problems being friction about housework that never got done because she spent most of her time doing school work. It was interesting that only two of the participants indicated that they shared housekeeping chores at home. The assumption from comments of others was that housekeeping was the woman's responsibility in their household. Finding time to cook was also an issue. Letisha felt guilty about how often her family had to eat out because she didn't have any time to cook. For Kate, it was time for her personal relationships that got sacrificed.

Kate Well, I do know that I tend to be an over-worker. That has always affected my relationships. I tend to choose [work] frequently over my personal relationship time, and I'm having to learn how to balance that more. Chase used to complain because I'd spend hours planning and he would get left behind.

Work spillover also came in the form of personal exhaustion. Whether it was being with 22 youngsters all day in the classroom or dealing with the 150 to 300 children who rotated through a specialist's class each day, it was sometimes difficult for teachers to come home and deal positively with their own children.

Billye Jo The thing that my kids had trouble with was, when I had told kids all day long a certain thing and I came home, I still had to tell my own children and [I got frustrated]. Sometimes I

> felt that because they were my kids they shouldn't have to be told. I just wanted to go 'ahhhh! I've been dealing with it all day. When I speak once that's all I want to speak.' My family has suffered because by the time I've given my emotional 100% during the day, I don't have much left to give. Not that I'm going to take, but I just feel, 'Come on, just let me have some personal time, I need some Billye Jo time, leave me alone.'

Besides her graduate studies, Letisha participated on numerous campus and district committees. The stress and work were hard on her health.

> **Letisha** Work last week was ITBS testing, that was very stressful. I'm the type of person that keeps going until I get sick. Speaking of stress, since I've been teaching I've developed high blood pressure and I tend to think it's because of teaching, I say "teaching" [but I mean] all the things that go along with teaching.

Limited Flexibility in Time During the Day

Although these teachers chose to spend a great deal of personal time working on school projects, there was another aspect of time that influenced their lives. That was the lack of flexibility in their daily schedule. Little things like going to the bathroom when you feel the need are not possible, given most teachers' schedules. Tammy described the problem.

> **Tammy** I have bladder infections a lot. I said to the doctor. 'Well, it's a teacher's curse, a lot of people have them.' He says, 'Why?' It was a young doctor. I said, 'Because we can't go to the bathroom; we can't get water; we have a schedule we have to follow. You don't leave a classroom of 30 kids.' And he had never thought of it, as a doctor. It was just completely foreign to him. 'Well, if you have to go to the bathroom, why don't you go?' 'What? I remember a teacher that left the room just for a few minutes to go to the bathroom and [when] she came back, one of the kids had scissors pointing at somebody else's throat.' You just don't do that, even in a good classroom.

When Rachel worked at the university as a graduate assistant, one of the things she enjoyed the most was being able to schedule her own time. As an elementary school teacher, she feels little freedom in her schedule.

> **Rachel** In the choral union, they were asking for volunteers who could go and sing during the lunch hour for some program. I [thought], 'Oh, well, in some other lifetime.'. . . [Another] teacher always wanted to walk during her planning time and the principal wouldn't let her. She said, 'You need to be in the classroom.' That kind of thing is frustrating. They don't treat you as a responsible adult able to manage your own time.

Added to the frustration of not having any flexibility in their schedules is again the frustration that no one seems to be aware of this aspect of their jobs.

> **Sarah** One of my best friends is the administrative assistant to a bank president. She invited me to meet her for lunch one day, any time between 11 and 2, and I said, 'Well, I have 30 minutes for lunch and that's really 20 by the time I get the children in and get them out.'

Limited Financial Resources

The third area of negative interaction between a teaching career and personal life was related to the financial rewards of teaching. When asked whether they had ever thought of leaving teaching, the most common reason given was related to salary. Although all the participants indicated that they had chosen the profession knowing that they would not become wealthy and had generally learned to live with what they made, it still was difficult. Several, like Rachel, stayed in teaching despite real frustration with salaries, "mainly because of being able to have the same holidays as my kids." They sometimes felt guilty that they could not offer their own children more material things in life. "When my kids were in high school, I know Carol didn't have what she considered very nice clothes. She knew I couldn't afford it, so she didn't ask, but I realize now that she felt she never had anything nice to wear at all." Bea echoes this guilt in her statement.

> **Bea** It was a struggle. I'm not imagining that. JoJo was still 3 years old when I got divorced, Tere was a wee, tiny baby, and

> Linda, Diana, and Dossie were in school. The girls grew up real fast and I felt real guilty because they wanted to have things I couldn't give them. Linda started working at 14, lied about her age at a pizza place. JoJo worked at Peduncles making hamburgers on weekends until 2:00 in the morning. Diana worked at Chip's Drugstore flipping hamburgers and Dossie worked at Montgomery Ward's. They all worked and went to school and I felt bad. They wanted to work because they wanted to have their own things and they wanted to be able to buy their lunch at school.

In the participants' minds there were two results of the low salaries. The first was the stress of either constantly living in debt or having to count pennies each month to stay afloat. Any extras took serious saving. Kate reported, "It costs money to go to a movie and I've never been in a position to afford that because most of my life the income has been up to me. I don't understand how people go to the movies a lot and take this trip and that one. How can they afford it?" Rachel expressed the same concern of not being able to afford even a fairly simple lifestyle. "I'm just constantly in debt, and it's not that I live big or extravagantly; I'm just way, way, way in debt."

In addition to the actual lack of money, there was a psychological impact. Low salaries made teachers wonder about the value placed on their work. Tom acknowledged that he started his career late, but had been told that he was one of the best teachers in the district. Yet with eight years' teaching experience he was only making $23,000.00, and would be on the same step of the salary schedule for the next four years. His wife, who had left teaching for social work had gotten $9,000 in raises in six years, while he had received only $3,000. He loved his work, but felt frustrated with this situation. Allegro voiced a similar complaint saying, with a master's degree and 11 years' experience, her salary was only $6,000.00 more than that of a beginning teacher. It was difficult for these teachers to feel their experience or expertise was valued.

While low salaries were annoying for those who had access to a second income through their spouse, 7 of the 18 participants in this study survived solely on their own salaries and often did not receive child support. Single parents found the financial situation particularly difficult. Sally, although extremely enthusiastic about her work, was bitter about her financial position: "Am I glad I became a teacher? Economically, no, not particularly. If I had to do it all over again, knowing what I know now, I would not have become a teacher." Part of her bitterness was insecurity about whether she would be able to survive financially in the years ahead. "Think about retiring. You're not going to be able to do it on a teacher's salary, right now." The other part was the result of her life's not working out the way she had expected. "Not knowing I would be a single parent, I thought this would be a good second income and a good way to raise a family. I thought it was perfect. When you're single, it's a really different view."

It was particularly hard to listen to these people who cared so much about children report such difficult struggles. The fact that salaries are so low in an occupation that is so important is distressing. A generation ago, at least teaching was generally considered a good second income. Many of these participants entered teaching with that expectation. One can't help but wonder what the change in the number of primary bread-winners in teaching will do to teaching salaries. Will this be the impetus for teachers to begin to speak out publicly against the low value placed on education by society or will their vulnerability, both psychologically and financially, cause them to remain oppressed?

From the descriptions provided, one could argue that teachers currently work a flex plan, putting in at least 10 hours a day during the school year and then taking compensatory time on holidays and in the summer.

Two hours extra a day, plus two hours of weekend time means 12 hours extra a week. If these twelve hours are multiplied times 36 weeks it provides 432 hours (56 days) or 11 weeks of extra time. When these 11 weeks are added to the 36 weeks school is in session, the total accounts for 47 weeks of the year. Adding to this the week teachers work before the classes begin, and a modest estimate of two weeks spent during the summer on attending inservice workshops and creating materials for the coming year, yields a grand total of 50 forty-hour weeks worked each year. Many times low teachers' salaries are explained by the fact that they are really only work 9 months. Descriptions of these teachers' lives make it clear that often this is not the case.

The three concerns participants expressed about the inappropriateness of teachers salaries are all legitimate. First, even without considering the importance of their work, teaching salaries are low in comparison with other jobs that require similar levels of education. Second, related to the confusion over whether teaching salaries should be considered 9-month-contract salaries or 12-month, flex-time salaries, are two contentions. If teachers are only working for nine months, the overload of work is unreasonable. On the other hand, if teachers are actually working flex-time for 12 months, then salaries are seriously out of line. Deciding on this issue, however, does not address the third issue concerning the relatively small differences between novice and experienced teachers' salaries.

All of the negative effects of personal life/career interactions were not on teachers' personal lives, however. Just as specific conditions in the workplace influenced personal stress and satisfaction, specific life-states influenced participants' ability to function in teaching as well. Difficult personal and home situations affected the care they could provide children at school during various periods in their lives. When she was attending

graduate school after her divorce, Sally was frustrated by her inability to meet her students' needs.

> **Sally** I taught and the kids learned and it was okay, but they needed me too much. They needed somebody just out of school who was going to save the world. I wanted to just teach. I had two children of my own, I was going to school, I was a single parent. I didn't have it to give to those kids. I felt I knew what they needed, the love and the attention, but other than being the teacher, I just didn't have it to give. I had two of my own and a lot going on and I just couldn't do it.

It was difficult to maintain a family during crises and be successful at work. At the time of the specific trauma, career involvement often was put on hold. Participants praised the help and support they got from their colleagues during these times of need.

> **Sarah** (after her teenage sons had been killed in an auto accident with a drunk driver) [I was amazed at] the tremendous compassion of the people I taught with. I taught with a tall, beautiful, black girl. She wrote my lesson plans for 6 weeks. I went back two weeks after the boys died. She would come in after school and she would see me, (we were in an open school), staring at my plan book and she'd say, 'I'll write some plans', and she would scrawl something across it. You know, she carried me, easily carried me for 6 weeks.

Positive Interactions Between Personal Lives and Careers

Just as the negative life/career interactions dealt with negative effects of personal life on career, as well as career on personal life, the positive interactions also are mixed. A new awareness and understanding of children due to parenting experiences, and improved teaching behaviors resulting from personal growth, provided positive effects derived from personal life that were applied to teaching. In the opposite direction, the three most commonly described positive effects of teaching careers on personal lives

were: the availability of time with family, job security, and the commitment and personal satisfaction that comes from enjoying one's work.

Increased Understanding of Children Due to Parenting

Participants described a number of ways life experiences had influenced their teaching, but none so often as the influence of their own parenting. Their responses were very similar to the quotation describing a teacher's reaction to parenting that originally interested me in qualitative research because it spoke so clearly to my own experience (Lightfoot,1983). It described a new perspective gained from parenting that enabled teachers to see the individuals in their classes as someone else's children. Participants reported that this perspective was accompanied by the increased understanding of children in their classes that came from interacting with their own children.

> **Nancy** I didn't start making the connection until they were close to school age. Then, as I saw behaviors in them at home, I began to understand more some of the behaviors of the children that I saw at school. As [my children] got older I was [better] able to cope with the behaviors of the students in my classes and understand why they were doing certain things that they did.

Beginning teachers often expected children to just sit in their seats and do what they were told all day. Seeing the students as individual people with individual needs became more the norm after having their own children. As Fuller (1969) described, teachers go through several stages of concern. At first their main concern is being liked. Their second stage of concern is for providing a good presentation. The third level of concern comes when they stop thinking about their own performance, and start thinking about what the child is experiencing. Having one's own children is obviously helpful in moving teachers toward this third level of concern.

Sally I still hadn't had a child and I was still pretty much, 'You will do this' and as I look back now, I was probably wrong for some kids. . . (After my child) I was more compassionate. When you have your own child and somebody may be in their face yelling at them, you tend to think, 'Well, gosh, this mother probably doesn't want me yelling at her kid either.'

In addition to seeing children as individuals, participants also reported major changes in their goals for students as they learned from dealing with their own children. In many cases this was a new awareness of the value of helping them become responsible for their own learning.

Sharon I think parent and worker have really interacted. When I first started at Gloria Academy I really had an incredible amount of energy for the kids and I think they really felt that.... Looking back now I just had all this love to give because I didn't have any little ones at home and so that was really pouring out to the kids. But the flip side was that I didn't have the experience to go with it. So it was harder to see a big picture of what we do for the kids. Back then I was thinking, 'Oh, no, all I really want to do is to make these kids feel good and just nurture them'.

Sharon reported that she lavished praise on her daughter Rebecca in an attempt to teach her to swim. After watching a swimming instructor who provided quality instruction and small bits of reinforcement when Rebecca actually made real progress, Sharon changed her understanding of the balance needed between praising effort and challenging children: "Suddenly this little kernel of praise was a whole lot more meaningful than my constant draping of praise on something Rebecca knew was mediocre." Teachers began to structure situations differently once they had this increased understanding. Parenting classes, centered on raising capable children, helped reinforce these same self-responsibility concepts that Sharon is now trying to apply to her teaching.

Sharon I think it became clearer in my teaching through taking this parenting class this summer where what we learned was

how to raise capable children. The way you do it is you allow them to grow and the way you allow them to grow is to experience things for themselves and not enable them to be bailed out all the time. If I constantly tell the kids, 'Put your equipment away', I'm telling them they're too stupid to know to pick the equipment up in the gym and put it up. What I'm trying to do now is to tell the kids the rules and then be less directive and, if they don't put the equipment away, then there's a [natural] consequence.

It wasn't just understanding children better that came from having their own children. Understanding other parents better was also a valuable byproduct.

Sharon We were laughing earlier that a parent would do something and we'd go, 'That's just awful! If I had kids, I would never let them do that'. and then you get into the situation and you realized, 'Yes, sometimes you are just overwhelmed and yes, they're going to do that.' They have minds of their own, they're going to do some stuff that you might not like and sometimes you just don't [take] the bait.

Sharon For example, forgetting materials and forgetting things. I guess I always thought, 'Why don't they have these things here; parents should take some responsibility for their kids.' Then having children, I realized that you can remind them before they walk out the door, 'Get your piano books or get your gym shoes' and they still forget them.

Teachers also began to recognize the importance of communicating their expectations to parents. From the teachers' end, it often seemed as if they had sent out plenty of information, but from the parents' end there never seemed to be enough.

Sharon I think too that what we need to do is educate parents that we're not horrible teachers because we allow the kids to suffer the consequences. I think that's the real trick is to have communication and getting parents to see that we're not being mean to their kids; we are being loving and we are being concerned because we want them to be the most capable and successful kids they can be and this is the way we can do it.

Jane I've learned to communicate more with parents. We're very upfront about what we expect and that this year is going to be a lot of work, but together we can really help their child.

> We've had a wonderful response. We never gave enough information before and there were always conflicts arising.

Simply growing older and more mature also affected interactions with parents.

> **Sharon** Well, as I get older, I get more confident in saying how the cow ate the cabbage. I think it just comes with experience and wrinkles. You can look some of these parents in the eye, they're 25 years old, and just tell them, 'Now look'. But when you're 25 and they've got wrinkles and experience, you feel a little disrespectful going, 'Now look...'

Understanding children and parents better led to real rewards in teaching. Teachers felt more effective as well as more relaxed.

Personal Growth Effects on Teaching

In addition to generally understanding children and parents better, the teachers who experienced difficult problems within their families felt it added a new dimension to their own growth and a better understanding of what children in their classes and the parents of those children were experiencing.

> **Tammy** [My daughter] suffers from manic depression. Now when I talk with parents, I can be more helpful. I had a run-in with a child this year whose mother said, 'Well, you know he's on an anti-depressant and he...' and I said, 'Yes, I know what anti-depressants do to the child and I know what they are like beforehand. We're very lucky to have this...' She had wanted to take him off of it. I went on to tell her a little bit of what had happened [to me]. 'My daughter is taking it and she is now learning to function on her own. It's not a time to give up on your child...' It helps me sometimes with other parents who are having problems, because before I didn't have any problems... you can sort of empathize with the parents.

Traumatic experiences with their own children also changed teachers' view of their work. When one of her teenage daughters developed an eating disorder, Bea became aware that she had been taking care of her children's physical needs, but had not really been able to address all their emotional

needs. After a lot of help and therapy, her daughter got herself back on track. Bea's thoughts about teaching were changed dramatically.

> **Bea** So when I got back to school, it was like every kid was special. Every child was going to be dealt with on an individual basis and every child was going to be looked at as a person, not just as a little body lined up, go here, go there, do this, do that. So ever since then, every child in that school, all 700 that come to me, whatever they have to say, they are going to have a listening ear.

After the initial trauma, for many going through difficult times at home, school was a haven where they were supported by good friends while they either recovered from tragedy or learned to cope with new problems. They compensated for inadequacies they felt at home with extra effort to be perfect at school.

> **Sandy** School was the only place that I could go that I felt good. It was like a respite from what was going on at home, what was going on in my husband's business, and what was going on with my mother. So, at school it was like ahh. I would just turn off everything when I was at school.

> **Tammy** As my family life got crazier and crazier, I began deciding that I had to be perfect somewhere else. I guess I sort of went overboard in teaching. Hours and hours of making sure that things were okay in the teaching. Things have settled down this year, but I still want to be able to do everything really well. When something is normal, it really helps.

Experiences with their own children were only one source of traumatic experiences that affected these teachers' careers. As indicated earlier, participants reported that almost every significant experience in their lives, from the death of a loved one to the birth of a child, had some impact on their teaching, in part because it affected the way they functioned as people. Often participants reported that the various struggles in their lives had made them stronger people. Given that many described themselves as shy, and

unwilling to break the status quo, making it through difficult struggles was sometimes the key to developing the confidence to speak out on issues they cared about. Sarah's description provides an illustration of this proposition.

> **Sarah** In '75 we lost our two oldest boys. They were killed by a drunken driver exactly the same age. ... Anyway, I learned out of that experience, probably to the detriment of the people I work for, that when you've lost your children, there is not much the school district can do to you that bothers you. So I tend to have my foot in my mouth a lot at school. I do speak out against things that I think are wrong or stupid, and I think a lot of things are wrong and stupid.

For others like Bea, the influence of traumatic personal events was evidenced in daily activities in the gym. She had come to believe that the most important part of life was feeling right about yourself. She came to see her every interaction with each child as an important piece of his/her education.

> **Bea** It's not just a game. I see the kid that wants to be the leader, the one who doesn't want to be the leader, the one who holds back. It tells me a lot about what's going on, and in any game that we play, if they shy away it shows me that they're fearful. I'm always encouraging them. You know, this fear that they have about not reaching out, fear of taking a risk, fear of being rejected. I talk to them about it. I don't get into lectures. We do a game and I'll say, 'Girls, the ball is not going to come to you, you've got to go for it. Do you hear what I am saying?' They understand, believe me, they understand. I am not about, 'Let's line up and do squats.' [Rather], 'Let's sit in a circle so we can all see each other. Your bodies are beautiful and fitness is fitness, but it's more about feeling good inside about yourself and when you do that, then you can do anything you want.' ... I get very philosophical.

Personal experiences affected participants' views of life and, thus, their perceptions of themselves and others. As these perceptions changed, so did their expectations and interpretations of their students' behaviors. Since expectations not only follow, but often invite attitudes and behaviors, they

are powerful aspects of teacher development. The effect of life experiences on teacher expectations cannot be overstated.

A number of participants described areas of personal growth that were very important to them as people. They did not often discuss (and may not have recognized) however, ways that their personal backgrounds may have affected their teaching. Kate, for instance had to deal with alcoholism early in her life, and years later she recognized the negative effects this background had on her personal relationships.

> **Kate** My father was an alcoholic and so I think early in the stages of his alcoholism when he was beginning to show that he was really going under, mother got him out of the house. I was in sixth grade at the time. . . . They got married again, but that ended pretty quickly in divorce again. I was really against it. So from then on there was a big struggle until he died when I was 16. He died from the alcoholism. . . .I have read a lot about co-dependency. I tended to be that way. I've learned a lot.

She found that her co-dependent behaviors affected her personal relationships outside of teaching. When she became aware of this and took action to change the nature of those relationships, a great deal of strain was lifted from her daily existence. She did not mention, however, how co-dependent behaviors might have manifested themselves in her interactions with children and teaching colleagues.

Sharon, likewise, indicated that dealing with her parents' alcoholism helped her understand the difference between being an enabler and trying to control someone else. She also came to understand that those in authority could sometimes be wrong.

> **Sharon** Admitting it, you can do a couple of things. You can [chose] not to be an enabler; You can set up rules for yourself. I went through a period of trying to fix my parents. You just can't fix anybody, but what you can do is inform yourself. You can understand the process so that there's more of an acceptance

about it and you can say these things are acceptable and not acceptable to me in my home and so you have to follow these rules when you are at my home. The difficulty comes in that we spend 20 years of our lives at home being told what the rules are by our parents and buying into that. We were really taught that you respect your parents; you don't argue with them. There was many a time when my dad was wrong but I would not have dared to argue with him. It just wasn't done. So it was a real painful process.

In her discussions of how parenting classes helped her to change her teaching perspective to enable students to take more responsibility for their own actions, she did not mention the effects of her parents' alcoholism on her earlier approaches to teaching. Her responses to her parents' alcoholism appeared very similar to the changes she described in her teaching as due to the parenting classes on raising capable children.

Judy described herself as having trouble dealing with authority after spending the first part of her life with an alcoholic father and many years in the convent where her superior's word was considered God's word. It wasn't until she and her husband had jobs in different towns and had to live apart that she felt she developed personal independence and self-confidence.

Judy I just don't feel like I started growing up for a long, long time. I waited for somebody else to tell me what to do and, although professionally I was very competent, I did not feel competent as an individual. So I always felt like I was a child. It wasn't until my husband lost his job and moved away for a year, (he was one place and I was another place), that I felt like 'I don't have to depend upon him anymore. I can do these things for myself.' I've always known I could; I just didn't. It was easier to let him light the coals or let him pay the insurance, so when he had to be gone for a while it did a lot for my own feeling of self-worth.

Judy indicated that she had felt professionally competent even though she had not felt personally competent. There were probably identifiable ways that her lack of personal self-confidence affected her interactions in school

settings, just as there were ways her increased self-confidence affected these interactions. Obviously some of the coping behaviors developed in response to difficult environments or personal situations are useful in teaching.

The danger, of course, comes when teachers are unaware of negative effects of coping behaviors they have developed in response to issues in their personal lives. While some participants appeared quite clear about the influence alcohol-abuse related experiences had on their philosophy of life, they did not indicate positive or negative ways they felt these experiences had affected actions in their teaching. Others just mentioned these personal experiences in passing near the end of the interview process, saying things like, "Of course he drank too much" or "My father was also an alcoholic". It was difficult to tell whether they had dealt with and resolved issues related to this area of their background, or whether these factors were not important in their lives, or whether the awareness of these events had been hidden more deeply in some protective mechanism. Given the strong behavior patterns found in co-dependent relationships, the common occurrence of co-dependency in families of alcoholics, and the number of individuals who enter the helping professions who have alcoholics in their families, it is important that teachers are aware of how their personal backgrounds are manifested in their relationships and teaching behaviors.

Although children, death, and alcohol-abuse had significant effects on many participants, there were many other powerful experiences that shaped participants' lives. Divorce often drastically changed financial resources and so had effects that were economic as well as emotional. As was true in their career choice, most participants had followed traditional, stereotyped norms in establishing their marriage/career roles. Most participants had married by the time they completed college and followed traditional norms, moving

with their spouses' jobs to new communities and then securing teaching jobs. They often did all the housework, in addition to their teaching jobs. In addition, several participants indicated that they had exercised little choice in the divorce decisions. This is epitomized by Nancy's response to a question about her role in the divorce decision. "Things had been rocky. One day I came home and he wasn't there. He sent our youngest son to tell me." Sally indicated "I stopped teaching to stay home with the baby.... I was thinking I would stay out of teaching until she was a year older, but my husband announced that he wanted a divorce, so that changed all that." These experiences forced additional independence on these people.

Other movements toward independence were recognized as having some negative consequences. Billye Jo, for instance, asserted her independence when choosing a partner against her parents' wishes and had to deal with the personal consequences that resulted. For Billye Jo, who had been very dependent on her mother, this caused a great deal of pain in her life, even though the marriage turned out positively. Her mother refused to come to the wedding and had little contact with the family for years.

> **Billye Jo** My parents did not really approve of my marriage and so there was a lot of hassling that went on for the first 10, 15 years. When David was born, he was the first grandchild and my mother did not indicate that she even wanted to come and see this child. We had been married five and a half years and I figured that by then her hurt should be over, but it wasn't; it wasn't nearly over.

This experience profoundly affected the strategies Billye Jo uses in dealing with people. She says, "Over the years I've learned how to deal with people better. I will go ten miles out of my way to get something done if I can avoid a problem. But I will still get it done."

As indicated by the participants' stories, it is clear that teachers do not live protected lives away from pain and suffering in the world. All participants reported a wide variety of difficult life situations within their immediate families. Perhaps Sarah portrayed the variety of experience best in her statement, "I had idealistic parents who wanted the best for their children. Still, I have a drug addict sister, I have a couple of divorces, and I have a brother who just had open heart surgery because he drinks too much. Within my own little family, I have a microcosm of what the world is like." Having personal contact with life's traumas and tragedies added a wealth of understanding and experience to the participants' lives.

Not all life experiences that affected participants' teaching were so traumatic as alcohol-abuse, death, and divorce/separation. Some were quite pleasant, like Billye Jo's description of growing up in the country, yet also had a profound and recognizable effect on her attitudes and abilities.

> **Billye Jo** We were just out in the sticks and you learn from that that you can exist and you can do things. We would ride bikes and ride horses and hike into the mountains.. . . I think that has influenced me greatly and because I can work by myself and take satisfaction in what I accomplish myself. I don't care if anybody pats me on the back or not.

Other experiences had a general rather than specific relationship to careers, as with Tom's long list of jobs and careers which individually appeared to have little impact, but collectively exhibited a powerful influence on his skills and personal goals. Tom felt when he settled into teaching that, "I really feel I have a ministry with these kids." He had spent many years trying other avenues and finally knew that this was where he belonged.

A similar benign, general relationship between personal and professional lives is shown by Rachel, who regularly brings her personal

interest in opera, folk dancing, and race-walking into her gym . During their warmups, children listen to music and hear the story from whatever opera she is practicing in civic chorus. She invites them to participate with her in 5 and 10K fun runs, and her Israeli Folk Dance group regularly performs for assemblies.

Time with Family

The participants' passion for seeing children learn, described earlier, was matched only by their passion for their own families. Participants generally married young and took time out from teaching to have and to raise their children. For several, this meant 10-12 years away from their regular teaching.

The parenting bar on the rainbow chart was always shaded darkly and the opportunities teaching afforded to be with their children was one of the values citedmost often and held most strongly by the participants. For these teachers, their own children came ahead of personal career goals. They enjoyed the fact that teaching, unlike many other professions, allowed them to both have a career and yet also be highly involved with their children. These teachers feel very strongly about time with their families.

> **Meg** [I value] the time I spend with my husband and the time I spend with my family. That's always in the back of my mind. I don't want to give up the times with my family. Dinner time is important at our house. We sit down and we eat dinner and we talk together. I guess that's another reason why I didn't go into the business world. I wanted a little more time with my family.

> **Bea** At that time I was offered a job, another job. This friend of mine was doing some federal programs and he said, 'I need you to... .' It was good money compared to my teaching. I could really do what I needed to do for the girls. We were just living from paycheck to paycheck, and it was really tempting. But, I knew that even though the money was going to be a lot, it was

> not going to be time with my kids. I was going to be traveling. It was a 12-month job and 'Who was going to be with the kids?' That was my priority, the girls, all five of them.

As Biklen (1986) noted in her article, "I have always worked," many teachers did not see time out of formal teaching to raise their children as time away from teaching. Several of these participants, who stayed out of teaching for more than a year or two when their children were young, ended up working in or starting day care programs of their own. Most others substituted and gained valuable experience. Their commitment to being involved in their children's lives did not end when their children were school age or when finances dictated that they needed to return to full-time teaching. In most cases their children went with them to the school where they taught. As Bea said, "My kids go where I go." Sally, who also had her children in the school where she taught, explained, "It's nice if they have a little activity or play. You're there, you can see it. You can be in touch with their teacher. Some teachers choose not to, but the vast majority, about 95% bring their kids with them."

Job Security

Three aspects of job security were apparent in these data. They were the security of keeping a job, the security of having the possibility of finding a job in almost any community, and the security of the acceptance of intermittent employment during child-rearing years.

As Sandy mentioned, "[There is] security. Once you are into the system, unless you really do a poor job, you pretty well have some security." Although teachers appreciated the comfort this brought their personal lives, they recognized the negative effects of this policy. Participants generally spoke highly of their colleagues, but lamented that a few really poor teachers

provided a serious drain on the system and needed to be removed. In addition, there was one requirement for this job security. Bea indicated teachers were afraid to speak out about deplorable conditions for fear of losing their jobs, and Tom felt he did lose one job because of his wife's political activity. The general implication was that as long as you didn't challenge the system, at least until you were tenured, your job was secure.

Many of the participants in this study had moved several times in response to their spouses' career desires and eventually had almost always been able to secure a teaching job in their new community. This universal availability of employment made teaching a very convenient career.

Finally, unlike many careers, the exit and re-entry pattern associated with teachers' choosing to stay home with young children was accepted and was part of the status quo in teaching. Knowing that there would be an opportunity to re-enter their careers after staying at home with children was an important form of security for many participants.

Commitment and Satisfaction

Although several teachers indicated interest in moving into a different role in the school, either counseling or administration, they all loved teaching and felt that it was the best career for them. In the final analysis, perhaps the strongest life/career interaction was the value these participants held about the importance of their work being an enjoyable aspect of their lives, not just activity they did to provide for living expenses. Most were willing to stick with it despite low pay and sometimes poor conditions because they loved teaching.

> **Sharon** My daughter was talking about how she's going to be rich when she grew up and I said, 'Well, that's just great'. She

> said she was not going to teach because we just didn't make any money to speak of. She knows that we are pretty careful with our money and I said, 'Well, that's true but that is not why I teach'. I said, 'For me, I love having a job [where] I don't mind going to work [each day]'. My greatest wish for Rebecca is that she has a job [where] she feels successful and that she gets lots of gratification from [it]. If it pays great, wonderful. But if it doesn't, I still hope for her that she will pick that kind of job. There are just too many hours in a day that are spent in a job. You should enjoy it.

From the participants' stories of their personal lives and careers, four main negative interactions, (that is, areas where an aspect of one affected another in an undesirable way), were identified. There were five positive interactions, where an aspect of one influenced the other in a desirable way.

Negative effects of work on personal life included spillover of work into home life, very limited flexibility of time during the school day (especially as compared with other professions), and limited financial resources. Negative effects of personal life on work centered around individual times when personal crises interferred with job performance.

The major positive interactions found included two interactions where personal experiences affected careers or teaching in desirable ways. They were improved understanding of children brought about by parenting experiences and changes in teaching behaviors as a result of personal growth. There were also three major ways careers in teaching positively affected personal lives. They were increased time with families due to the daily and yearly schedule format, job security, and the commitment and satisfaction that comes from enjoying one's work.

Although these interactions appeared to be the strongest and most prevalent in the data, their identification certainly does not mean there were not many other individual interactions between these teachers' lives and careers. The earlier sections in this chapter identified many of the factors

contributing to job and career satisfaction and frustration which clearly interacted with personal lives.

Common Themes Expressed by Each Group

Although there were many commonalities among classroom teachers, physical education specialists, and other specialists, there were also some themes that were expressed specifically by one or another of these groups. These represented differences in the experiences of teachers in different jobs within the school. Several elements were identified that were unique to classroom teachers' jobs, including pressure to produce high test scores, frustration with short-lived educational reform, and the time commitment to grading papers.

Specialist teachers agreed that the the above areas were not central features of specialist jobs and identified a number of unique themes that were characteristic of their particular jobs regardless of the area of expertise. Physical education, art, and music specialists all described similar experiences: attraction to and enjoyment of the subject of specialization, knowing all the children in the school, teaching each child for several years, and seeing the school from a global perspective. In addition, they all struggled with difficult schedules, low status, and job insecurity.

Finally, there were also elements uniquely identified by each of the specialist groups. Music teachers often moonlighted, directing music programs at their churches, and strongly valued performance and its contribution to poise and self-confidence. Physical education teachers were affected by a number of special concerns including the weather, facilities, and equipment. In addition, they struggled with the frustration of incompetent colleagues and the poor teaching that was often considered acceptable in

physical education by other members of the school community. The one art teacher in the study experienced the themes common to all specialists, but individual themes for art teachers were not identified from this one participant. In the following sections, the themes presented by each of these groups (classroom teachers, all specialists, music specialists, and physical education specialists) will be presented in turn.

Common Themes Expressed by Classroom Teachers

Classroom teachers reported a number of unique aspects to their jobs that were not experienced in common with the specialists. These included: pressure to produce good test scores, frustration with short-lived educational reforms, and the time requirements of grading papers and planning for several subjects. Although some specialists took issue with the proposition that extra time requirements were unique to classroom teaching, for the most part they confirmed distinctions presented by both classroom teachers. As will be shown later, classroom teachers did not generally have the same awareness of themes unique to specialists. Each of these will be discussed in turn.

Pressure to Produce Good Test Scores

The most common complaint of classroom teachers was the tremendous amount of pressure to produce test scores that the school could be proud of, and the detrimental effects they perceived this had on time usage and curriculum. As concern has risen across the country about the quality of education, many states have adopted some form of standardized testing with which to evaluate the effectiveness of schools. Texas first instituted a test of basic skills given in all odd-numbered grades. Only a few years later it was

decided that more than basic skills should be tested, and a new test was instituted which delays standardized testing until the third grade.

School scores for each of these tests have been published in the newspaper, inviting comparisons between schools, and individual class results have been closely reviewed at the school level. As Sally describes, pressure of this type fell exclusively on classroom teachers.

> **Sally** I am sure they look at the fitness [scores], but they are not published in the paper. Nobody says, 'Oh, well Gladwyne kids are healthier and can do more situps than the Hagerstown kids,' but, lordy, we give the TAAS test and standardized achievement tests and we have got to know what the scores were for third grade in every school.

This pressure to produce good test scores had two impacts on the classroom. One was the increase in the amount of learning time devoted to test-taking skills, particularly how to "bubble in" computer scan sheets. Teaching young children to read questions on one page and then answer questions by choosing the appropriate place on another page for the response is not an easy task. Test-taking skills obviously are very important to successful performance. Teachers felt that time spent on test-taking skills produced better scores, but not necessarily better educated students.

The second impact described was related to curriculum coverage. Pressure to do well on standardized tests led to teaching to the test and thus restricted the curriculum offered.

> **Sarah** The change from TEAMS to TAAS takes first grade off the hook, puts pressure in other places....We are doing exactly the same thing as before, exactly. The administration didn't learn anything from that [last testing setup]. Nothing. Anyway it's made first grade come alive, and these women, (I just couldn't understand how they could stand to teach the way they were teaching) are suddenly all excited about whole language. I laugh about that too, because it's exactly what I was doing at Honeyeye in '55 and '60.

Pressure to do well on test scores created a "get ahead" mentality which pushed content and expectations from upper grades into lower grades in an attempt to create additional preparation time for the standardized test. This curriculum reorganization had little to do with the developmental needs of children and a great deal to do with maximizing test scores.

> **Sarah** The first-grade teachers met with kindergarten teachers this year. BIG-time meeting. Now we're going to make our kindergarten children sit in chairs and write with pencils the last part of the semester so when they get to first grade they can sit in chairs because first-grade children can't sit in chairs. We're just losing sight of the fact that there are developmental things. Where are we going to stop it? Now we're going to push it down and ask the preschool people to make sure that three-year-olds get to play with play dough and get to cut and paste and learn some fine motor skills because they don't have time to do it in kindergarten.

The question of whether it is developmentally appropriate for six-year-old first graders to sit in chairs all day was not asked. They had to complete standardized tests and so had to be able to sit in chairs and "bubble in" computerized answer sheets. Obviously, since "bubbling in" little circles is not a natural activity, it must be taught and it is difficult to teach if children are squirming out of their seats. Teachers expressed concern about the long-term results of this test-driven curriculum where results were based on such short-term effects.

> **Sarah** I've just seen this more and more and more. Skills pushed down and, at the same time increased concern about high-level thinking skills. They don't seem to make a connection that the physical things in early childhood development are vital to [higher level thinking]. Now you don't have time to take the kids out into the woods and look for worms, or sit down and just watch a frog. ...
>
> The little kids are being cheated and then, down the line, the culture will be cheated because early childhood formative years are so vital to [critical] thinking skills that are in an older child and in a young adult. That's one of my biggest frustrations.

The question of who would stand up and speak out for the children was asked. It brings up the question again of why more teachers do not speak out against practices they think are wrong.

> **Sarah** When some of the old guard in this town dies, the kindergarten program will be pre-first-grade. It will be learning skills for first grade. Who is going to stand up there and recognize that early childhood education and physical development are vital for intellectual growth?

Specialists agreed that classroom teachers were affected by test scores in ways they were not. Specialists treasured the freedom they felt in their teaching while classroom teachers were frustrated by the reliance on test scores to assess educational success.

> **Judy** In the classroom you do not have [the same] kind of freedom, especially in this day and age with all of the mastery tests that our teachers are doing right now. They are doing nothing but these mastery tests. They're bubbling in these blooming mastery tests just so you can prove that every kid has succeeded....So they are under a lot more structure than I am.

Both classroom teachers and specialists agreed that this type of accountability pressure was an important difference in the structure of their jobs.

There were some ripple effects of the testing pressure on the special subject areas as well, however. As Sarah, a classroom teacher, describes the push for academic testing reduced time spent outside the academic classroom. One of the biggest frustrations for specialists, as will be discussed in the next section, was their schedules, which sometimes involved seeing classes only once every three days.

> **Sarah** In our school we have a wonderful PE teacher. She is very aware of trying to encourage family participation in things that will help the kids live healthier lives. At one point, it was only every-other-day PE, now it is every third day and combined classes.

Educational Reform

A fad-like approach to educational reform was another common concern of classroom teachers. Both short-term interest in each reform and the quality of inservice instruction provided for each new program were criticized.

> **Sarah** Every five years in this district we have a new formula, each of which has merit, all of which are based on good solid research. Effective schools. Madeline Hunter. I love Madeline Hunter. She turned the whole school around in Watts after the riots there in the 60's, changing nothing: same textbooks, same students, same teachers, same material. All they changed was training teachers how to teach for mastery level. This district, I mean, threw it at us like it was a bucket of water. We had to sing this stupid song called seven strokes for teacher folks. You would gag. They had teachers master these seven basic steps which are valid. Nothing wrong with the philosophy at all. Some of us were already familiar with it, but nobody would admit that. Then they had some mediocre teachers demonstrate it poorly and made us watch these really dumb videotapes. Then they wonder why every time they say Madeline Hunter, the teachers turn off.

Classroom teachers felt that, every time they began to feel comfortable with one innovation, a new one was introduced that required new (and often conflicting) skills and curriculum.

> **Sarah** But you know then we were all into Madeline Hunter and about the time we all figured out how to use it, along came something else. There was something between Madeline Hunter and Effective Schools. They don't stick with anything long enough [to] make change really work....

The short-term emphasis on various reform movements was described as having two effects on teachers. First, it was a real drain on teachers' time and energy. To become familiar with the reform being championed took time and effort. Since teachers' days were fully scheduled with children, there was little time available for the required inservice. Any new learning

had to take place outside of general working hours. The second problem was that there was never enough time to refine the new strategies before the next reform arose, so teachers usually felt unsuccessful in the implementation of the reform. Anytime something new is tried there are adjustments that must be made. Teachers found that after spending extra time learning about the new reform and planning to implement it, they often had just finished their first trial, found their mistakes, and were ready to make it successful when the reform cycle started over again. They were left feeling unsuccessful and felt the students lost because they endured so many first-time trials and rarely got the benefits of a practiced and refined approach. Consequently, teachers were less enthusiastic about trying the next new reform that came along.

In addition, while the new reform was being heralded, conflicting realities were at work. While one curriculum approach was being advocated, testing programs were based on different values.

> **Sally** They say one thing, but they expect other things. Like they said, 'Kids are important and test scores aren't' and 'You need to treat kids right' and you know that is a lie because they publish the test scores. They are going to compare schools so you know that is a line of bull.
>
> We went from basal reading to whole language and writing. That was important, and then what happened was the test scores went down because we didn't teach the way the test tested, so everybody was upset. Yet they said [whole language] is what we were supposed to do. This is the leading research. This is what everybody says is the best. But what we did was we did not train the kids to take the test, so they did not do well.

Teachers indicated they they were not consulted about the appropriateness of the tests themselves or the issues surrounding their use. Classroom teachers on the other hand supported grading papers as a valuable form of assessment and feedback worth the time spent.

Time Spent Grading Papers and Planning

Classroom teachers felt the number of subjects taught and the large amounts of grading required of classroom teachers created a difference between the classroom teachers' and specialists' jobs. Several specialists agreed.

> **Sally** (classroom) [Specialists] don't have the mound of paperwork that we have for grading. I know that they do some in PE. They do some fitness things, some record keeping, but [not] the day-to-day grading of five or six stacks of paper.. .

> **Ann** (other specialist-art)I don't have a lot of grading to do [as an art teacher]. I think in a lot of ways it is easier because we do not have a lot of preparation and grading outside of class.

Specialists agreed that they did not have the same daily grading requirements and planned only for one subject, but several claimed that the difference was in form rather than amount. Specialists felt their planning and grading came in larger chunks since they dealt with several hundred students and often were involved in whole-school activities.

> **Rachel** (physical education) I think at times classroom teachers have a lot more paperwork than I do. Ours is cyclical; when we are testing then we have tons of paperwork, but it is not constant. Classroom teachers, from what I see, have it constantly.

Although some classroom teachers also felt their planning was more detailed, there was not a general consensus. Sally explains, "I've got to get them through this many math skills and this many reading skills and we have [tests at the end of the six week grading period] and standardized achievement tests... . In PE they have, 'We are going to play volleyball these three weeks and then we're going to teach basketball these three weeks.'" Many specialists, however, indicated that this was an oversimplification of their curriculum. They planned for individual skills within each unit,

whether moving to a steady beat and being able to clap different rhythms in music, or developing efficient overhand and underhand throwing patterns in physical education.

> **Kate** (other specialist-music) I was on the committee. ... Not only only do we have [state required objectives], but we have essential competencies with district competencies [as well]. There are 60 essential elements in fifth grade alone that I am required to teach, and I teach kindergarten through fifth grade.

The difference in perception of depth of planning may have been related to the standardized testing. In the classroom there was a specific, publicly announced measure of how many children had achieved the skills, whereas in the special subjects there was not. Special performances at PTA meetings by the special-subject teachers were usually the only public indication of what their students were learning.

Some specialists indicated that their grading requirements were just different because of their schedules.

> **Kate** (other specialist-music) In my school district, our supervisor wants us to have one written grade per six weeks. Now that doesn't sound like much, but we only see the children 10-12 times. . So I have to teach the skill, but to be able to test it, I have to stop. I always do two practice tests and, when we take the test, I have to allow another day in the six weeks for anybody who was absent. So four of those 10-12 days are 'Let's take a five minute test'. I feel that my observation skills, daily grade of something that the child is doing, is a lot more important than what a piece of paper can tell me about how a child is doing musically, so I give daily class-work grades [to 250 students].

Other specialists mentioned their own grading and planning time came in larger chunks than classroom teachers' because of the number of students taught. These teachers also seemed more involved in large-scale events.

> **Sharon** (physical education) I feel we do have a lot of grading. I don't think we have the daily grading that they have, but we have report cards for a large number of kids, and we don't give

> [just a] a single grade. We give separate information on fitness, physical skills and social behaviors. It is quite a bit [of work], but I don't think that is perceived by the other teachers as the same kind of thing. ... We see 300 kids. Even though you might not have sets of papers from every hour and a half for 22 children, just with that number of children you cannot [have the same] kind of papers [to take] home every night. But you do have notebooks that the kids are doing in PE, their muscles notebooks. You have the jump rope unit where every kid has an individualized task sheet progression and you have to keep up with those. So there is paperwork and there is testing. Just because of the sheer number of kids you have to be creative in working out ways to make it not be so time-consuming.

Overall, classroom teachers felt more restricted in their teaching because of standardized tests and the resulting accountability hysteria which forced them to spend extra time on test taking skills and to direct the curriculum by the test content. Although they were interested in improving their professional expertise, they were annoyed by the constant changing of educational reform movements that heavily impacted their lives. Few of these ever were attended to long enough to make the positive change for children that they might have. More time was spent on learning new ideas than getting them to really work in the classroom. Time spent grading papers every night was also reported as a prominent and unique part of their jobs.

Just as participants identified a number of elements unique to the work of classroom teachers, they also identified elements common to the jobs of all specialists, regardless of the subject taught. The next section presents these common elements in specialists' work.

Common Themes Expressed by All Specialists

Although the participants in this study provided very similar descriptions of most aspects of their lives and careers, there were several themes in the interview conversations with specialists that were different

from those which characterized the reports of classroom teachers. The most basic was a specific love for the subject matter they had chosen to teach. Also, important to specialists were several factors about the structure of their jobs. Being specialists allowed them to deal with all the children in the school and to interact with each one over the course of several years. In addition, the fact that they worked with every teacher and every student in the school enabled them to view the school from a global perspective. Perhaps related to this global view of the school was their primary interest in serving all the children of the school even though they enjoyed special performance groups such as jump-rope teams and choirs. In contrast to generally held beliefs, these specialists were more interested in everyone's participating and developing competency than in developing a few elite performers.

On a distinctly negative note were concerns dealing with the lack of respect by others for their contribution to the school curriculum. This theme was applicable to all specialists and had a strong effect on professional decisions as well as personal lives.

Attraction to Subject Matter

As might be expected, specialists often mentioned their own comfort with and enjoyment of the subject matter as their introduction to teaching. When it was time to choose a career they had chosen the best of their talents and life interests.

> **Kate** I come from a musical family and no matter what is going on in my life, music has always been sort of the one thing that I feel comfortable with. I sing when I am unhappy, or I sing when I'm happy, but music is always there. I tend to fall back on it whenever something else doesn't go well in my life. So it just seems to be a natural thing for me to be teaching and to be doing music.

Meg When I was in primary school, I was encouraged to take tumbling lessons and ballet lessons and toe lessons. As I came to be a teenager, [my mother] encouraged me to join the leagues for playing tennis outside. I always enjoyed it and I felt the camaraderie. I felt like that was a plus to my personality that I felt confident in that area. So I thought, 'Well, I'll go ahead and work with this because I do love to work with children.'

Nancy At the end of my high school, the last two years, I became really involved in choir. I was an all-stater, here in Texas, and that was when I made up my mind that this was what I wanted to do. I wanted to become involved in teaching music.

In addition to their love of the subject, they enjoyed children and helping others and so teaching was a logical career choice. Many physical education teachers had acquired some teaching experience from leaders clubs in junior high or high school where they helped others in their physical education classes. Music teachers often had taught in their churches. It was difficult to discern whether the attraction to the subject or to teaching was more important. These factors tended to work together in the decision to become specialist teachers.

This love of the subject led to some very specific goals for students. These centered around helping develop an attraction to the subject. This was different from classroom teachers, who did not mention specific subjects for which they hoped to develop positive student attitudes. More often, classroom teachers spoke in terms of hoping to develop a general love of learning.

Knowing All the Children

Knowing all the children in the school was mentioned as a positive element of their jobs by every specialist. They spoke of this as a real treasure, rather than as a burden.

Nancy I like knowing all the students. One advantage is working with the students who have brothers and sisters. When there are problems, they often show up in both [children] and it is easier to pick up.

Whereas classroom teachers often indicated they worked best in or preferred a particular grade level, this was not generally true for specialists. Although they sometimes preferred younger or older children, they enjoyed teaching different classes during the day and often stated they preferred this to spending the entire day with one age group of children.

Sharon I feet so privileged and lucky to be in PE because I teach kids in first grade all the way to sixth grade and every grade has something different to offer. I like the real smart, snappy talk of the sixth graders and I love the uninhibited cuddly response of the first graders and then there are things all the way in between. That is a joy.

These teachers also treasured the experience of knowing the children over time, often 6 or even 7 years.

Ann I like seeing them mature. I like knowing all the kids in the building instead of just [one] class. I wish that I had more contact with them than just seeing them twice a week, but then if you spread that out over a period of years, I think it makes up for that. I know their strengths and weaknesses and it allows me to kind of build on that, I guess. It is not like I just have him for a year and 'Okay I've done what I can. It's the next teacher's turn' It allows me that opportunity to continue to have some impact on the children, to have some influence ...

Bea [Seeing them year after year] means a great deal because, to me I would say, more than 50% of your teaching is knowing the children. From the time they are in kindergarten, I watch them grow. I watch them change. I watch them become who they are. That is the neat thing about my teaching. A classroom teacher has them one year. The next year those kids go to another teacher and that teacher has to get to know them all over again. ... They know when they come in what I expect of them and they know what to expect from me. I am not someone they have to get to know all over again and begin their little role playing. By the time they leave, I do not have the discipline problems that a classroom teacher has. I really don't.

> **Tom** I really like seeing kids go from kindergarten through fifth grade. The middle school is just a few blocks down the road and I try to get down there and follow them and see how they are doing. ... There is just a lot of satisfaction for me [when I] see some kid not even be able to tie his shoelaces in kindergarten and be able to do a flip in fifth grade. There is just a real sense of accomplishment and achievement

This multi-year contact provided an advantage that one specialist felt would be helpful for classroom teachers as well.

> **Bea** I think that is one of the things I would like to see done in education. Instead of the kids being promoted, I would like to see that teacher go with those kids as far as they can go...

These same sentiments about teaching all the children over several years were echoed by each of the specialist participants several times in the interview. Specialists wished that they had more contact with the children and envied the close relationships children developed with classroom teachers in one year, but said they really would hate to give up knowing all the children in the school and being involved with them over several years. For Judy, who was thinking about moving back into the first-grade classroom, this factor made it a tough decision.

> **Judy** It is good. I like knowing all the kids. If I go to first grade then I won't know everybody anymore and that is a real neat thing, knowing every kid in the school.

Knowing brothers and sisters, literally whole families of children at once, as well as being able to watch them grow over the years led to a view of the school as a whole, rather than a single grade perspective. Specialists knew what was happening at each grade level and interacted with every teacher in the school.

Global View

Having a global view of the school was related to knowing all the children in the school. This global view was evident when the specialists and classroom teachers talked about their work. The specialists, by the nature of their jobs, talked more about the whole school, whereas the classroom teachers related more to their own classrooms or grade level. Specialists noted this difference in views.

> **Rachel**: I think that the specialists in the school have a more global view of the whole school, definitely. The [classroom] teachers are kind of, which makes sense, in their own grade level and in their own little class. We get to see a broader picture.
>
> **Nancy** We see more people for one thing, more students. We have to be aware of what is going on in the entire building pretty much. Classroom teachers are concerned about what is going with their own class, but we have to be real careful that we pretty much know what is going on school-wide at all levels.

Specialists often lamented that despite these obvious strengths in their teaching perspective, they were rarely asked to make use of this valuable knowledge. As Rachel asserted, they felt they could contribute more in this regard: "Every now and then we are asked, 'Now do you see this with these kids?' and YES...!".

Related to having a global view of the school was a sincere interest in serving all the children, not just the elite performers. This inclusive attitude was echoed by many of the specialists. Where the public often sees the elite performance of the choir or athletic team as the specialists' main interest, these elementary teachers described a very different attitude. In one district, winners from each school's music contest were brought together to compete

for the district championship. Two teachers indicated they found this inappropriate.

> **Allegro** When we did the [district] music test, I had 95% of my children in third, fourth and fifth grades pass that test, 70% or above. I do not take my children to the big contest downtown. I figure I could field a team that probably would be almost as good as anybody's. I mean no matter what your population is you can always find five or six that can compete, but I fail to see the value of those five or six kids listening to that stuff and getting all worked up over it just so they can recognize something by the first note. I do not see any value in that myself. I have heard that children just broke down in tears when they could not recognize something. To me, it is not worth that kind of stress. Give the test in the school. Reward everybody that makes 100. Brag on 'em, honk your horn at 'em, give them a lollipop. You know they feel good about themselves and that's the end of it instead of the poor little five or six that are your top and they go down there and, if they do not win anything, they feel defeated.

Kate indicated a very similar attitude in reference to this event. She chose activities for participation where all her students could be successful.

> **Kate** [At the recorder festival] they know it is not a competition. They have a guy who makes sure we are all tuned in together and we just play through the music we have all learned. It's not first or second place, but everybody gets a certificate for participating.

Tom's entrance back into teaching was through Little League sport, but not because he was attracted to the elite athletes. Rather it was because of a program that supported all the participating children.

> **Tom** Another experience that impacted me was my experience with the recreation department in Fleetwood. That program seemed to me to be just so wholesome and so right on for kids because not only did it give kids a real good basic teaching, [but] kids were getting to participate without any kind of pressure and sportsmanship was really emphasized. They did not keep records or have playoffs. I just really liked the emphasis in this particular program for kids to be able to participate, experience some degree of success, and learn about the values of playing and taking part and how to treat other people.

Knowing and caring about every child in the school was important to these specialists. The reason they knew every student in the school is because they often taught every student in the school. Fitting specialist classes into the school day was a real challenge, often driven more by mandated teacher-planning periods than the needs of the students. This led to extremely difficult schedules and working conditions.

Difficult Schedules

The remaining two themes concern negative aspects of the specialists' work lives. All specialists found their teaching schedules very difficult. Class size, number of classes, and the order of classes all created problems. In many settings, specialists had regularly taught class sizes larger than those of classroom teachers (one and one half or two classes).

> **Rachel** I remember when we had double first grade classes. I sat down one time and I just looked at that long line of kids and I thought, if they got organized, they could tie me up, take out all the equipment, have a wonderful time, because there were 60 of them. And there would not be anything I could do. I thought it was a disaster. [There were] little marks on the floor they [had to stay on] when we'd jump rope or they would kill each other. They got through it, but not happily.

Large classes scheduled for a limited time made it impossible to know the individual children.

> **Rachel** There were some children I would think, 'I have never heard their voice!'. It's just that there were so many kids and the class is so big and you don't see them that often. The ones that were real good and did what they were supposed to do, you just didn't hear them talk. So I [felt] like, 'Say something to me; what does your voice sound like?'

In addition to having more than one class at a time, specialists often had special education students mainstreamed as well, creating an even larger

group with even more diverse needs. Settings with so many children made even good teachers begin to feel the ravages of burnout.

> **Meg** I was really burned out. Stuart School opened up and, if I had not gotten that, I was probably going to quit. I couldn't do that anymore. I did not believe in the way it was, teaching double groups, and plus it was just too physically hard. Twelve double groups a day, every 25 minutes, it was just crazy.

Large class size was not the only scheduling difficulty with which specialists had to live. In some cases, they taught as many as twelve 25-minute classes a day which left them feeling like robots. Getting a new class organized and excited about what they were doing, 12 different times each day, was extremely difficult.

> **Billye Jo** I have taught as many as 12 classes a day and they were 30-minute classes and all I would get off was lunch, a 30-minute lunch. There were no breaks, no time slots in between it was back-to-back. That is nobody's picnic. You want to leave teaching for sure when you get stuck with stuff like that. You should. That turns you into a robot and, when you are a robot, you are not a human caring person. And when you get big, huge classes and when you get multiple classes back-to-back, that is the way you become. That chair could teach as well as somebody that's having to deal with that over and over and over. That is no way for any human to have to exist.

Other specialists had 45-minute classes, but only taught each class once every three days.

Since each class period was the only time they would see the class for three days (or the only 25 minutes they would spend with these children in a day), teachers felt the stress of being "on" every minute. There was no time when they could set children to work on a project and step back and think for a few moments, because that was the only chance they had to interact with this whole class of children.

Short daily classes had the advantage of regular interaction, but often meant teaching 12 classes a day with little time for instruction, in between getting the classes into the classroom and getting them back out again.

> **Rachel** It's just having to repeat yourself so many times a day, you just felt like you were a record, and could not stop. You barely did the minimum and they were gone.

For those who taught longer classes, schedules involved fewer classes each day, but seeing each class only once or twice a week. This format left them struggling for ways to help students retain material from one class to the next and to develop the rapport and continuity they desired.

> **Kate** That is very frustrating. I want so badly for them to find what works for them musically. I envy the teachers [in the neighboring school district], and I know they have the problems trying to meet with the number of classes, but they get them every day.

> **Billye Jo** I had to cut out 1/3 of my curriculum when we went from every other day to every third day. In addition to seeing them less often, we have to spend more time on review because sometimes it has been five days since we have seen them.

Not only was it difficult to teach content with students only coming once every three days but, if a field trip or assembly interfered, the specialist often did not see the class for over a week. A class missed represented 10% of the instruction for that grading period.

> **Rachel** This last three weeks the fifth graders were rehearsing the program,which is only once a year, but that meant that I didn't see one class two times, so it was already the middle of the second week in December and I had not seen them since the end of November. So that was a real frustration. I was way behind with them. Things I wanted to get done with them I just couldn't possibly do. You don't have very much practice time. I don't know if I see kids improving.

Some specialists felt that seeing different groups each period made it easier to deal with discipline. Ann mentioned that, when she taught in the

classroom, there were often one or two children who just wore her down each day. As a specialist, she struggled with a different two children in each class and that was easier for her to address. Judy explains the flip side of this advantage. Any small problem is left to fester until the next class which may be as many as five days later for some specialists.

> **Judy** What is frustrating, and this has been very painful for me, is when you correct a child. [The problem is that] because I do not see the children every day, if I had to correct Tyler this morning in my 8:00 class, by noon I may have forgotten about it. I have gone on and in the meantime I've seen 100 other kids and Tyler is still mulling on this. He hasn't forgotten it. In a classroom, if I had the same child all day long I [correct] Tyler at 8:00, but at 9:00 I tell Tyler what a neat kid he is because he did this so well. Tyler has forgotten then that I chewed him out at 8 or that he was in trouble with me. I do not have that luxury and that is very hard and I don't think parents or teachers or even principals understand.

What seemed to others like minor changes in the schedule meant major difficulties for the specialists. When lunch and planning periods were scheduled meant the difference between having daily indigestion or not.

> **Meg** We used to have our planning time first when we got to school, teach six classes, have 25 minutes for lunch, and have six more classes. I got to where I did not even eat lunch, because I was putting away stuff from the morning and getting out different things for the afternoon, and [was] just exhausted.

Often schedules included back-to-back classes of very different grade levels. Although specialists usually enjoyed all ages of children, they found it hard to make the physical and mental changes required by these conditions.

> **Nancy** Right now I go from third grade to kindergarten. Okay, that is a pretty good drop. Obviously materials are going to be different. It's not sooo hard on me because I can have my [music] materials right here with me. But art and physical education, I mean they've got to really move some stuff.

The best way to get a decent schedule was to volunteer to make out the school schedule themselves. Nancy describes the result. "This year our art teacher, with the principal's approval of course, made up the schedule and we [now] have better schedules than some of the other buildings as far as the sequence of the grade levels."

The number of extra productions and performances specialists directed had been reduced as the pressure for high test scores increased. State curriculum guidelines mandating the minimum time to be spent on each subject meant that schedules could not be changed for groups of students to get together for special rehearsals. Although a lot of work, specialists felt these productions were an important part of the child's education and were disappointed at the loss.

> **Bea** They have taken the fun out of teaching. I don't do programs anymore like I used to. I think that is a very important part of their growth, to get up there on that stage and to do things they were so scared of and do such a wonderful job. Part of building their self-confidence comes from 'They did it!'

Scheduling frustrations included having large classes as well as a very limited amount of time with students. Twenty-five minute daily periods were exhausting, since there were so many scheduled each day, and it was difficult to get anything done in that amount of time. Forty-five minute classes on a three day rotation meant a great deal of time reviewing, and difficulty developing any continuity. Both patterns were frustrating.

The private school was slightly smaller and had better overall student/specialist ratios. They also had varying class times appropriate for the subject matter and age of the students. Art and music were scheduled twice a week for 45 minutes while physical education was scheduled daily for 30 minutes. Due to the lower student/specialist ratio and other part-time

responsibilities they were assigned in the school, the physical education specialists did not end up feeling like robots.

Lack of Respect for Curriculum Contributions

Perhaps even more wearing than the schedule was a related concern: lack of respect for their positions and their part of the curriculum. Although specialists felt in most cases they had administrative support and were respected as individuals by other teachers, they did not feel their contribution in the school was respected. More frustrating even than lack of respect, was the belief that few other people had any idea of what they did in their classrooms. Also, always in the back of their minds there was the concern that their positions might be eliminated. In many cases they felt outnumbered and overpowered.

> **Sharon** I think the amount of respect that is given the profession is the major way [being a physical educator] is different.... I don't think that other teachers give the PE teachers the amount of respect that they deserve. I think they look on it as a frill job. They used to call us the frill teachers, in joking, but I think there was some seriousness underneath that joking. In fact one of the teachers said the other day, 'In my next life I'm coming back as a PE teacher,' indicating that it is really the plush job and plush because there are no papers to grade and you don't have to prepare; all you have to do is go in there and it just happens. It's like there no realization that, yes, it happens because you have structured and organized all this. They come in and say, 'Well, gee, you don't have to do anything; the kids are all stretching and they're all jogging', not, 'How did you teach them to do that?'

One of the educational reforms in Texas included mandating a 45-minute uninterrupted teacher planning period each day. The result for specialists was that, rather than schedules being created to serve students' needs, they were organized around providing the 45-minute planning period.

Once enough specialists were hired to cover the planning period, any additional staffing was seen as a luxury. The needs of students for these specialists' services became a secondary concern.

One problem that covering the 45-minute planning time created was that school districts scheduled young children for class periods longer than minimally needed, but not often enough for good retention (such as the 3-day rotation) . Other districts opted to split the 45 minutes between two special subject areas resulting in 22-minute periods (or 25 minutes if they stretched the planning period to 50 minutes) a practice which provided classes too short for any indepth practice.

The more tragic result, however, was the resulting belief that the main function of specialists was to cover the class during the classroom teacher's planning period. This attitude often was held by the classroom teachers and occasionally by administrators.

> **Rachel** I think probably the majority of the teachers, they appreciate physical education but yet they don't. I think they still see it as their break time. A lot of them don't, but a lot of them do. And they do not really care that much what we do with the kids, just as long as they are happy and contented.
>
> **Allegro** I feel like I am respected as a person but, because of the way it is set up, we cover their planning periods, and so naturally, it just looks [to classroom teachers] like 'We are the rulers around here and you are the peons who come and take care of our children so we can be off', [which is frustrating] when I also have a master's degree.

Allegro indicated that the situation was different in the sixth grade center where she had taught, since everyone was a specialist. The students she taught were not considered someone else's class just stopping in, but were her class.

Since physical education instruction was required daily in the primary grades by state guidelines, often physical education specialists were required to put a great deal of extra effort into providing lesson plans and materials for classroom teachers to use on the days their class was not scheduled with the specialist. It was difficult to reduce the curriculum to a page they could hand to someone else to carry out and it was disheartening for them to see these efforts ignored.

> **Meg** At that time when the school district said we must do what they called extended PE. Physical education was required daily by the state so I had to make a plan for the classroom teachers to do on the day that the children did not [have class with] me and she was supposed to take the kids out for 20 minutes and follow this plan. I tried to find real simple games, things [they could] do on the playground or on the grass. I didn't have to make sure they were being implemented. I just had to provide them. So I made the charts, and every two weeks we would change activities and I was very conscientious about it, but [it was obvious] most of the teachers did not use them.

Another indicator of the low status of special subject areas related to the budget. In many cases, special subject funds were not included in the regular instructional budget. Other sources of support were severely limited or unreliable. Teachers were grateful for contributions from the PTA, but this format for funding underlined the marginal status of the special subjects within the school. It was interesting that elite programs like a choir, which served a small number of students, were often better funded than the instructional program that served all of the students. In spending the budget, teachers showed both ingenuity and a commitment to serving all the children.

> **Kate** The first year I taught I had a $50 budget for the entire year and I taught every child in the school. Now that was my general music fund. I also was required to have a choir and it had a $300 budget. I didn't need to buy anything for the choir, because they

> had costumes and the music was already there, so I had to get creative. I sidestepped through choir budget, used the music at choir programs and then the rest of the day in music [class].

There were budget concerns at other levels as well. The low status felt by the specialists in the school made them insecure about their jobs. Whenever there were budget cuts to be made, specialists jobs were identified as an area to be considered. Several mentioned that they wondered each year at budget time 'Will they cut specialists?" This concern created a drain on their enthusiasm for teaching.

These sentiments about low status in the school were echoed in various ways by the classroom teachers. For example, one classroom teacher saw significant responsibility only in the depth of involvement she had with 22 students. She did not acknowledge the hundreds of students for which the specialist was responsible. Frustrations were described from both sides. In the situation below, specialists turned in grades for their several hundred students to the appropriate classroom teacher who recorded them on the report card and permanent record card.

> I feel that a lot of times they don't really understand what goes on in the classroom. Their life is more focused on that one thing. Whereas we deal with the whole child and we see a much different aspect of the child. They do not have as many responsibilities as we do. For instance, grading. ... They frequently do not turn the grades into us [soon enough]. This is a little gripe that we have down here in this part of the world. We close the six weeks off on a Friday and they don't turn them in to us until Monday. Well, we have already written out our reports cards and done the permanent records [so this] is a terrible situation.... They are much more sensitive than they used to be about impinging on the time of the classroom teacher.

She definitely sees the specialist classes and content as outside the center focus of the curriculum.

> We feel a lot of times that the special areas just do not realize what is going on in the **real** (author's highlight) classroom and so they are insensitive to the needs of maintaining a schedule and getting things done. But we have also gotten more sensitive to the fact that the children need other things and we are more flexible. That is one of our bywords, to be flexible.

She acknowledged, however, a related issue which was one of the biggest frustrations for specialists: lack of communication about serious problems in a child's home or background. Since the classroom teacher had fewer students and extended daily contact with them, they knew of specific problems that were occurring in the child's life. Often classroom teachers failed to inform the specialist of these situations. Specialists reported asking why someone had not been to class in a while and being told, "Oh, didn't I tell you? He moved to Wisconsin last week."

> **Jane** I think they have to know a lot more children so it would be as if I had 150 children in here everyday and I wouldn't know the child as well. Frequently there is not enough communication. Something happens to the child or we know something and we fail to say that to the special teacher. They then act toward the child in a way that might be inappropriate because they do not know the whole story.

The underlying belief that special subject teachers are not part of the mainstream was voiced once again in a statement about discipline.

> **Jane** I think they are very good in this school by not allowing the children to be undisciplined. I think that is an important part of being a special teacher, to maintain the discipline that is prevalent in the school. Anyway, I think that they have to maintain a different set of rules for discipline but yet still make it fit in with what **we** (author's highlight) think is the right way for children to be.

Sally reinforced the low status of the special subject content with several comments.

> **Sally** From where I sit, I do not think the pressure is as great. If somebody's kid does not do well in PE, usually nobody is up

there having a fit. 'How can I help them at home?' and 'What else can I do with them?' If they are not passing math, then they are a little bit more concerned. I do that with my own child. He is not particularly good in PE and I say, 'Honey, don't worry, it's okay, just do your best and that's fine', but if he is not doing well in math, I am going to be up there saying, 'What can we do?'

It is different. I am not saying that they are not as important, but if they came and said, 'You can have PE or math this year in the budget', we know parents would say, 'We want math.' I think it is important. I think all those things are important. I would not want my child to go to a school that didn't have music and art and PE. I truly would not. But again, if they don't paint well, [laugh] I do not think it is going to make or break them.

She also touched on one of the sore points for the specialists in her comment about missing special area classes to complete classroom work, but in so doing indicated how central the special area curriculum is to the children.

Sally We have little disagreements about when I think I need to keep a child in. I would like to keep them from specials, if they have not done their work, they need to continue, but they don't see it that way. [Specialists say], 'I'm a teacher, my class is important, they will come to my class.' I can see both issues, but there are times when I want to keep the little bugger in from PE because that is his favorite thing, but then, that is not being very professional to them, and their class is important too.

Classroom teachers Sarah and Letisha, unlike Jane and Sally, saw the special-subject areas as an important part of the developmental needs of the children. Sarah demonstrated a real understanding of many of the specialist's concerns. She suggested that she had developed this understanding from eating lunch regularly with a specialist and so heard about things from the specialist's point of view. Her comments are reported at length here because they reflect a level of understanding that not only is remarkable for a classroom teacher, but is exceptionally sensitive by any standard.

Sarah I think they have all the same pressures and unrealistically so. They have to teach all the children in the

school, for one thing, so they have larger numbers to deal with than we have.

I think we have more problems with parents than they have, although in our school, they aren't excluded from problems with parents because [the parents complain] to everybody. I think that because of the importance to administrators of keeping parents happy and having children test well, that if I have a problem and it is going to impact a child's learning and how the parents are going to feel about school, I would get the ear of the administrator faster than my friends that teach music and PE. [Their] needing materials might not be considered as important. In our particular school because what they do gets really good PR for the school, specialists are regarded quite highly.

They are supposed to have help from the volunteers, but basically the volunteers that come into our school do xeroxing and art work for the classroom teachers. I would say probably the biggest difference is that they do not get recognition, enough recognition, for what they really do and how important it is.... I don't think we are aware enough of their problems. I think of the scheduling problems. Rachel is a genius. If we ever lost her, our school would be in trouble because neither of our administrators is any good at scheduling. Think about scheduling a 45-minute special area time in 3 different areas for every class in the school and getting everybody happy. All the primary teachers want their classes in the afternoon so they can have skills uninterrupted in the morning. There are some real challenges and I see no job description for a PE teacher that says you have to design the schedule for the whole school.

There are just a lot of unrealistic expectations for those people. Big-time programs spring and fall that nobody wants their kids out of class to [practice for] and yet everybody wants the program to be beautiful and wonderful and impress the parents. They have a lot [of other things] to contend with, things like tardiness. We have a 45-minute block of time that is for special areas. They have 45 minutes to teach their skills. In the years that I have worked here, the expectations have become increasingly complex and very much in black and white. You don't just teach kickball and basketball, you do all kinds of things. You do gymnastics. You do all kinds of skill-development things. Our gym teacher has sometimes ten centers going at the same time with little kids in all those centers, everything from rope climbing to ball bouncing, everything. I don't think classroom teachers appreciate the fact that it is really nice when your children are there when they are supposed to be there on the dot, ready to go into class. You

know, teachers frantically grading papers look up and 'Oh, golly, five minutes ago I was supposed to pick my kids up from gym.' I think that causes [the specialists] real headaches. We are really lucky, our people are some wise people and they just kind of roll with the punches, but I think that is something we could do better to help them.

The things our PE program does to develop fine motor skills are vitally connected to a child's being able to write or write numbers in columns. I work with little tiny people. One of the hardest things in the world when you teach two-digit addition and subtraction is to get one number under the other and nobody thinks that relates to PE, but that does relate to PE.

Aside from the skills they are learning that will transfer into later life, (and PE today has really moved into this, life skills, things that can carry into your life so that your lifestyle is a healthy lifestyle), I don't know how little children would survive [without these outlets]. We keep pushing more and more and more down on them. If they did not have that physical outlet and encouragement to develop themselves, I don't know.

Sarah summarized nicely most of the unique attributes and concerns of the specialists in this study. In her short monologue she discussed the difficulties of the schedule, the low status of the special subject areas in the school curriculum, the lack of time for practicing for special programs, the attraction of the subject matter, and the fact that specialists teach all the children in the school. The only theme she left out was the global perspective specialists develop for the entire school community.

Despite the fact that specialists struggle with low status and difficult schedules, they value the specialist job structure of knowing all the children and working with them over the course of several years. Although they do not have the same pressure to demonstrate achievement through standardized tests that classroom teachers do, they feel a lot of stress from the dynamics of being in a low-status position. Classroom teachers like Sarah who understand their situation are viewed as important allies in the school setting.

Common Themes of Music Specialists

Music specialists accounted for five of the six participants in the "other specialist" category. Two common themes appeared in their stories, moonlighting at churches and valuing performance.

Moonlighting

Music teachers were the only teachers who mentioned moonlighting during the school year. Four of the music teachers simultaneously held jobs as music directors, playing the organ, and directing choirs at their churches during most of their careers. Their involvement with music in the church was a large part of their lives.

> **Judy** I ran the church school there, which happened to be right next door to the public school, and I would leave [the school] in the afternoon and I would go over [to the church] with the same kids I taught all day long. I was always sort of anxious for the school day to end so I could get over there. I absolutely loved it.

These participants had grown up playing the organ and singing in the church choir and viewed these other responsibilities as a natural part of their lives. The resulting workload seemed reasonable and they appeared to gain an important sense of self-worth using their skill in a setting where it was highly valued. When Judy's son asked her why she taught everyone else except him, however, she dropped this outside responsibility, demonstrating once again how important family commitments were to these teachers. She was surprised to feel the amount of stress that was released and the extra energy she had when relieved of that outside responsibility.

Value of Performance

In addition to their regular teaching, music teachers described extra programs that they created and developed each year. They saw choir performances and PTA programs as giving the children the opportunity to get up in front of a group and to develop poise and showmanship. These skills, they argued, were extremely important in many aspects of life; such as interviewing for a job. Music specialists also argued that these performances had positive public relations value for the school. This same value was also good for their programs. As Allegro pointed out, people get their impression of how good a music program is from performances they can see and remember, since they rarely observe a class.

Common Themes Expressed by Physical Education Specialists

The love of subject matter, joy of teaching all the children, concerns and frustrations of poor schedules, and feelings of low status discussed in the section describing commonalities among all specialists were particularly strong themes for the physical educators. In addition to those four themes, physical education specialists described a number of unique aspects of their jobs. These included the importance of weather conditions, facility problems, and the demands of coping with incompetent colleagues.

By far the most common threads for all physical education specialists was that they loved to move, enjoyed the out-of-doors and wanted to share this love with their students. This enjoyment of the out-of-doors, however, did not mean that it was easy to teach out in the elements on a daily basis.

Weather

The uncertainty of weather conditions and the difficulty of dealing with the effects of weather conditions on teaching provided a daily source of stress. Teachers, (two), who enjoyed really good facilities were affected less by this than the rest, but it was a clearly identified source of stress for all. Dealing with changing conditions and having plans depend on good weather created a lot of worry.

> **Billye Jo** I think one of the things that makes us so different is the environment that we have to handle. The days that I am doing something outside, it is critical for me to know what the weather is going to be like. It is very important that I keep tabs on what the weather forecasters say and then also test it with how I see the weather. The classroom teacher, the art teacher, and the music teacher, they do not have to deal with that. Many times my lesson plans are written for one thing and [have to be] totally changed because it turns out cold and [we can not run that day as planned].

It was not only the uncertainty of the weather that physical education specialists found difficult. The daily stress of being outside was also a severe challenge. Meg reported, "I am getting tired of being out in the heat and the wind. I love being outside, but I have just gotten to the point where I am more tired at the end of the day." The sun and wind, for which much of Texas is famous, were real problems, not to mention the added noise nuisance of planes overhead and cars going by. All of these elements made teaching difficult.

Facilities and Equipment

The physical requirements not only of teaching but of equipment storage and arrangement made heavy demands on personal energy.

> **Billye Jo** The large amount of equipment, like the basketballs we are using right now, takes a lot of effort. I have to be sure they

> are all pumped up. You have to physically pump [enough] balls [for each pair] to have one and then [figure out] where to store them. The transporting of equipment to your site, if you are going to do outside work, is [a difficult part of the job].

The physical demands of the activities taught also became more difficult as a teacher got older. Often physical education specialists wondered if they would still enjoy the activity and feel good about their work as they got closer to retirement.

> **Tom** I talked to my supervisor about whether to pursue a master's degree in physical education or in administrative roles or maybe go into the classroom at some point. I'll be 50 years old in July. Handstands and cartwheels and some of the things are getting harder and harder and, as my body begins to wear out, I am not sure how good a physical educator I might be. I might be in for a few more years. I just really feel good about where I am now and what I am doing.

Compounding the problems with the weather was the fact that most were teaching in very difficult facilities in terms of temperature and space. In some cases, teachers had to change locations from one class to another, hauling all of their equipment with them.

> **Tom** I think really my biggest frustration is not having a place to call my own where I can set up and just teach. We just cannot set it up because we don't have enough space. We just finished our square dance unit and we would have to stop and gather up everything. The records, the speakers, everything had to be put on a cart, and we have to go 40 yards to the north to the portable building [for the next class].

Low status again may have haunted these teachers as money for facilities was continually siphoned off.

> **Tom** When I came here in '86, they said that a bond issue in '88 was going to provide money for us to have a mini-gym. Well, the bond issue in '88 came and was passed and they spent it all someplace else. Then they said, 'Well, the next bond issue is going to do that for you.' Well, they have a bond election coming up the 16th of May and, when the committee submitted all their recommendations for the bond issue, the total dollar figure was astronomical so they decided that before they

> presented this to the public for election they better pare it down. Well, one of the things they pared down was expanded facilities at this particular school and several other schools in the district..

Even those with adequate facilities found it difficult to get minor repairs done. Billye Jo had struggled for 20 years with a gym that was freezing in the winter and hot in the late spring and early fall. Finally, after a decade of requests, some exhaust fans were installed. Two years later, after many years of requests, the cut-off switch for the heaters was moved down, from 12 feet up on the wall, to a place where she could reach it to turn it on or off.

Coping With Incompetent Colleagues

There was an additional aspect of the physical education specialists' job that caused more concern than any of the other issues. Although they sang high praises for a few colleagues, physical education teachers often found themselves working with poor or unqualified physical education teachers. Since colleagues in their subject area were rare, this was particularly frustrating. While struggling with the demands of actually trying to actually teach large classes, some teachers had actually been told another physical education teacher to "ease up and roll out the ball" and just let the kids play.

> **Meg** At Rogers they maintained double classes [when I left] and were able to find a teacher who did not mind doing that. He just didn't teach the way I taught. They had exercises at first and then they just played so that solved the problem of double classes right there. You didn't have to organize 12 groups to practice because you just didn't do it. I just could never teach that way.

The physical education specialists spoke sadly about a number of their colleagues who had either made their own jobs more difficult or had just not provided them with any real stimulation.

> **Meg** I know I have to rely on myself a lot of times. Talking with other PE teachers is supportive. We don't do that nearly often

> enough. Andrew was the only colleague I have had up until today who took the ball and went with it. I did not have to spoon-feed Andrew. He just came in and taught, just like I would go in and teach. That part has been difficult for me. Ever since Andrew left, I have [worked with] people who have either had no experience or [were trained to teach something else] So I have to be the mentor or teach these people how to teach physical education besides doing my own teaching. I am really getting tired of doing that. I mean, every year there is such a turnover that there is always somebody new coming.

Assigning teachers to physical education who were not interested in it increased Meg's frustration. Since it was generally believed that anyone could teach physical education, teachers were assigned who were trying to work their way into the district, or who had been relieved of other responsibilities. If, after Meg had spent a year trying to work with the person, an opening came up in the classroom or somewhere else the person would rather be, the teacher would leave and Meg would have to start all over helping another transient novice teacher. Inservice work with colleagues did, however, sometimes pay off if the novice teacher stayed around.

> **Meg** The gal I have been with now for four years, she has really developed into a much better teacher, and we have much more professionalism between us now. I think she is going to end up being a fine teacher. She's starting to contribute more. 'Oh, you think we could try this?' or 'Have you read this in this magazine?' So that has been helpful. The years when I have had colleagues like that have been really fun teaching.

The frustration of watching colleagues "roll out the ball" was compounded by the coaching requirement attached to secondary physical education jobs. Teaching physical education once again was at the bottom of the list of responsibilities. Two of the participants in the study would have liked to teach at the secondary level, but did not want either the coaching responsibilities or the association with coaches who did not care about their teaching.

One participant indicated she had spoken out about frustrations with her colleagues. She was teaching in junior high at the time. After repeatedly having her class kicked out of the gym by coaches who just let their classes play on their own, she refused and they took the matter to the principal (who was an ex-coach). She feared for her job, but told him she would not give up the space any more. The coaches all laughed as he called her "a spunky little lady". Although she felt personally abused, she had accomplished her mission. In general, however, teachers appeared resigned to their situations, doing what they could to influence colleagues, but then just letting go.

The specialist situation is different from the classroom teacher in regard to opportunities for interaction with colleagues. Since there are so many more classroom teachers in each school, even if there isn't a colleague at the same grade level with whom to work, there is still a good chance of finding a valued colleague at an adjacent level who has matching interests. In the specialist areas, one or two colleagues in the same subject was unusual. The likelihood of matching interests with this one person was small.

It was unfortunate that instead of the enthusiastic teachers spurring the others on to greater heights, sometimes they toned down their enthusiasm to be more accepting of the other person's priorities.

> **Tom** I feel a real sense of dedication to it. The thing I have to be careful about, when other people don't, is: I have to remember that I did not always either. Sometimes I feel like I am a little bit hard on my teaching partners because at the end of the day the only thing they look forward to is going home, when there are a lot of neat things we could do for kids if we would just give a little extra effort.

Having only one or two colleagues who are interested in the same subject matter and often being in philosophical disagreement with them was a real hardship for these teachers. It is not surprising, therefore, that they

were extremely enthusiastic and appreciative of the few good colleagues with whom they worked.

There was no question from listening to these physical education teachers that they loved their work and believed in its importance for children's lives, but also that they found many aspects of their jobs very frustrating. These teachers felt their jobs were physically tiring. They loved the out-of-doors, but teaching in environments that were hot, cold, windy, and noisy all had a draining effect.

When the physical demands of the environment were added to the physical and mental demands of teaching large numbers of classes each day or seeing classes on an irregular basis, the job became overwhelming. The response of colleagues who "rolled out the ball and let the kids play" angered and frustrated the physical educators interviewed for this study. This frustration was intensified when poor teaching was ignored by the administration.

The goal of the physical education specialists was to have children feel good about themselves and feel competent and skilled in movement activities that would lead to active, healthy lives. Despite the barriers in their jobs, they continued to value this goal and persevere.

Although several of the classroom teachers had described themselves as shy and meek, none of the physical educators had used these terms in describing themselves. In addition, the two most politically active participants in this study were physical education teachers. Perhaps these people survived because of their assertiveness skills. Stories of active political efforts to improve their own teaching situations, however, were rare.

In summary, there were several ways the unique aspects of the classroom teachers' and specialists' jobs affected these participants. Classroom

teachers felt pressure to have their children perform, but felt secure in their position in the school. Specialists felt more freedom in their teaching, but found stress in the insecurity of their jobs and the lack of respect afforded them. Classroom teachers took more grading home, while specialists graded more students in periodic spurts, spent more outside time preparing for large events or conducting programs that involved all the children in the school (such as PTA programs and giving awards for fitness achievement).

Music specialists were different from other teachers in the moonlighting that they did directing music in their churches. They also believed that developing confidence and poise was an important part of education and placed a strong value on the importance of performance opportunities in this development.

Physical educators described their jobs as physically demanding, although for the most part they enjoyed that aspect as they liked the out-of-doors and to be physically active. At times, however, they found it very tiring and, in some cases, they were concerned about their ability to meet the physical demands of the job as they got older. Physical education specialists were frustrated by those colleagues who "rolled out the ball" and in so doing reinforced low expectations for teaching in physical education classes.

CHAPTER 5

INTERPRETATION, COMMENTS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

The purposes of Chapter 5 are to set the data gathered in this study into the context of related literature, to provide observations about and interpretations of the data, and to identify relevant implications of this research. The preceding chapter set the stage for this work. Chapter 4 described the lives and careers of the participants in this study. Following a short biography of each participant, common experiences as well as differences among classroom teachers, specialists in general, music specialists, and physical education specialists were described using the participants' words. Data were presented relevant to the two questions of this study:

(a) In what ways do elementary school teachers describe the interaction of their personal lives and teaching careers over time? and

(b) What aspects of their job structure do elementary school teachers identify as affecting their personal-life/career interactions?

This chapter relates the data from this study to previous work on career choice, job and career satisfaction, and career and life stages. It provides interpretation of selected major personal-life/career interaction issues identified for all teachers, as well as some effects of the different experiences of specialists and classroom teachers. The implications of those findings, both for teachers and the schools in which they work are discussed. Finally, issues worthy of note, that arose during the course of this study, but that are not directly related to the questions under consideration, are discussed.

Major Issues for All Teachers

Data from this study were consistent with the literature on many points regarding career choice, job and career satisfaction, and career and life stages. Teachers' descriptions of these elements in their lives were remarkably similar to those in other qualitative studies on teachers' lives. Although individual situations have been selected for analysis and discussion, home and school lives generally were inseparable. The many issues surrounding interactions between lives and careers, however, all start with career choice.

Career Choice

In this study, data related to career choice centered around two factors: characteristics of those choosing teaching and reasons why they chose teaching. The impact of these factors on the nature of teaching situations is varied and complex. They affect teachers, their families, their students and the structure of the school as a workplace

Characteristics of Those Choosing Teaching

Four major characteristics of those who choose teaching have been identified in the literature. Three of these are consistent with data for the participants in this study. These were a desire to help others and see them develop, the belief that intrinsic, psychic rewards are more significant than extrinsic factors such as pay (Book, Freeman, & Brousseau, 1985; Delong, 1987; Schlechty & Vance, 1983), and a general attitude of compliance and maintenance of the status quo (Lortie, 1975). In addition, in this study specialists cited an attraction to their specific subject matter as affecting their career choice. Although several participants questioned their ability to

survive financially, they all held to the belief that there were things in life much more important than money.

The fourth characteristic sometimes reported in the literature (for example: Pigge, 1985; Savage, 1983), a relatively low level of academic ability, was not confirmed by the interview data. Although there were no empirical data collected on intelligence or academic ability of the participants in this study, all the women claimed to have done well in school. The one male indicated that he was an average student. From such individual comments about grades in high school and college, it appears that teachers in this study may have been as academically competent as any other group of students. This is consistent with Book et al.'s (1985) analysis of the ability of education majors at Michigan State. Participants appeared to be capable yet compliant individuals attracted to helping children learn.

Reasons for Choosing Teaching

Although these teachers reported that they chose teaching because they liked children, enjoyed being around them, and wanted to help them learn, the great majority of teachers in this study also described themselves as entering the field at a time when there were not many other career opportunities for women. Simply stated, they had believed that women were limited to teaching, nursing, or social work careers, and they had chosen teaching.

Although sex-role expectations were a significant factor in many teachers' decision to enter teaching, none of the participants mentioned being aware of how sex-role expectations might affect their own teaching. Their discussion of sex-role stereotyping ended with their own career choice. Clearly a pattern of compliance with sex role expectations holds the potential

for shaping expectations of students as well. Sundal-Hansen's (1985) contention that sex roles have been ignored or underemphasized in career development theory and career guidance practice suggests that the teachers in this study are not alone in failing to connect this aspect of personal history with professional development.

Most participants expected to spend their whole careers teaching. Like the teachers studied by Granrose (1985), few participants had made long-range career contingency plans. Some anticipated taking time out to raise children, but none reported having any specific plans that could be described as career development. As Biklen (1986) noted, the images teachers have of their careers do not match the traditional male model of moving upward in status according to a schedule. Rather, they saw devoting their lives to the work of teaching children as their career goal.

Most of the participants in this study did leave teaching at some time in their careers, re-entering usually after being home with their children. This apparently is a widespread phenomenon and supports Murnane & Olsen's (1987) contention that new recruits are not the only source of supply of teachers. Many teachers drop out and return at some point during their careers. Returning teachers account for a large percentage of those applying for teaching jobs each year.

Although many had chosen a teaching career from limited possibilities, these participants remembered having made an active, positive choice to enter teaching. None of them had gone into teaching by accident or because they had nothing better to do. Several had subsequently thought about leaving teaching, usually because of financial insecurity, which is consistent with other researchers' findings that one of the most common reasons teachers leave teaching early is because of inadequate salaries

(Donovan, 1983; Schindler, 1985). In general, however, these participants were professionally active and felt they had found a good place for themselves in life.

Effects of Teacher Characteristics on Teaching Situations

The participants' generally compliant attitudes, in part exemplified by their decision to follow sex-role-stereotyped expectations in their career choice, have a number of implications for schools. Lortie (1975) reported that those who choose teaching usually support the status quo. In this study, participants almost all described themselves as good students who did what they were supposed to do in school. They fitted comfortably into the school mold and were happy there. As discussed in Chapter 4, these participants tended to be hard workers, who did the best they could with whatever situation they were provided. Given a limited career choice, they chose the one they liked best and got on with their lives. As Lortie (1975, p. 54) stated, "It is considerably easier, then, to see recruitment into teaching as leading to reaffirmation than as leading to challenging the past." When faced with filthy facilities and poor working conditions, rather than challenge the system that allowed these conditions to exist, they cleaned the rooms, tried to develop new and appropriate curriculum materials that fit the children, and looked for opportunities to escape to better schools. Participants in this study indicated that they struggled to do the best they could as individuals, but rarely made efforts to question or change the system itself. As a result teachers came and went, but the conditions remained the same.

There are a number of reasons why teachers usually choose to work within the system rather than change the system, even when basic problems are apparent. Speaking from an optimistic frame of reference, there are two

explanations for the lack of assertive action on political issues within the school or in the greater society. The first, discussed earlier, centers on the difficulty of separating home and school lives and a moral concern about influencing young impressionable students by bringing personal political beliefs into the classroom.

In addition, the theme of acceptance and working together is a strong piece of the fabric of the school. Due to the number of individuals involved, the restricted time frame, and the complexity of dealing with a wide variety of student needs, schools require a high degree of cooperation to function efficiently. Sometimes it takes a great deal of skill to both say what you believe and also get along peacefully with everyone. When this level of skill in communication and negotiation is lacking, teachers choose silence over causing disruption.

On a more pessimistic note, schools are filled with individuals who support the status quo. Communities expect teachers to conform to traditional and conservative norms of behavior (Lightfoot, 1983) and to exert pressure to insure that they do. This comformity is further reinforced within the school by pressure teachers put on each other to maintain the status quo. Their own backgrounds, together with this current pressure to maintain the status quo, create a situation that makes it difficult for teachers to advocate change. Since teachers tend to be people who were compliant in school themselves, and who were trained in teacher education programs which tacitly confirmed the need for such compliance, they may not have developed either strategies for bringing about change or the inclination to believe it is proper to do so. Judy provided direct evidence of this.

> **Judy** I have just a healthy respect, an unhealthy respect for authority. It's [only] just now that I can speak out. Although

> professionally I know I may be right I don't always say what I know is right because, you know, in the convent right or wrong the voice of your superior is the voice of God. That's been drummed into you.

Even when teachers would like to bring about change, they may be truly afraid to take risks for fear of losing their jobs. These are individuals who, initially at least, believed they had few career choices. Further, in two instances described by participants in this study, asserting personal disagreement with the system may have cost them jobs. Tom believed that his wife's political activity in the teachers' union caused his contract not to be renewed, since she was tenured and he was not. Rachel described responding to the question on belief in a Supreme Being with her personal belief statement, "This is not relevant to my teaching abilities". She did not receive a job in that community. Most teachers felt dependent on their jobs. Although they talked of desirable career alternatives, such as law, that they had not considered possible before, they did not see these as realistic options at this point in their lives. Since these teachers were all past the midpoints in their careers, actually considering a major change was difficult.

Finally, the teachers who described situations where they had been politically active found frustration in the complacent attitude of their fellow teachers. It is difficult to rally for a fight when you know no new troops will appear to support your position. Asserting beliefs that run counter to the status quo is a lonely and dangerous activity.

Whatever the causes, effects of teacher compliance on schools is devastating. The persistence in schools of common practices such as sex role stereotyping and corporal punishment reveals the slow pace of change. Schools often follow the changes in society rather than lead them. The fact that teachers openly identified the part sex-stereotyped role expectations

played in their entering teaching provides some explanation for the maintenance of this aspect of the status quo. Although several teachers expressed regret that more career opportunities were not open to them when they were starting their careers, only one teacher, Rachel, indicated that part of her mission in teaching was to expand the vision of her students beyond existing stereotypes. Other teachers indicated that, now that other options were open to women, they would encourage young women to take them, but they did not indicate any other areas where they were working to liberate students in their classes from sex-stereotyped role expectations.

In addition, one can't help but wonder whether the tendency toward acceptance and compliance is one of the reasons innovation is often imposed from the outside in education, and why there are so few fights led by teachers for better conditions in schools. Teachers see it as their responsibility to do the best they can in a given situation, but not necessarily to actively work for change in that situation, particularly when such engagement runs contrary to the disposition of school administrators. Why is it that, faced with inappropriate testing practices or poor conditions for instituting educational reforms, teachers suffer in silence? Understanding their personal backgrounds and attitudes toward authority provides some explanation.

Several participants recognized that struggles dealing with authority and difficult experiences in their lives had made them stronger people, more able to deal with authority issues. Judy, after overcoming her acquiescence to authority developed in the convent, and Sharon, becoming aware that her submissive attitude toward her father was not appropriate in all settings, were two examples of participants coming to a new view of their relationship to authority figures. Perhaps now they are ready psychologically to become agents of change, whereas as young teachers they were not. Recently, staff

developers have acknowledged the difficulty of helping teachers enact change advocated in inservice programs (Duffy & Roehler, 1986; Sparks, 1983). Inservice programs on effecting change need both to condone activism for change as an acceptable teacher behavior and to provide the skills necessary to be successful in bringing about change.

Career Pathways

Almost all the participants in this study had, during the early stages of their careers, taught in a very difficult school setting. Sometimes the situation was difficult because of a poor administration, sometimes because of the backgrounds of the students involved, and often both. Although there were a number of bright spots to these experiences, wherein the teachers felt they made a difference for children, by far the most common experience was frustration. These experiences often came early in the teachers' careers and, by the teachers' own descriptions, certainly not when their teaching skills had matured to the level of secure competence. As teachers gained options and felt increased frustration and fear in their teaching situations, they moved on to less troubled schools where they felt they had a better opportunity to have an impact through their teaching.

Although this career pathway seems perfectly logical and appropriate for the teachers involved, it does raise the question of what happens to the children in these difficult schools. Not only do these children come to school with more problems than appear possible to handle, but they are often greeted either by teachers who have given up on teaching and settled for surviving in terrible conditions, or by young recruits who certainly have not yet developed into the skilled professionals required in such a demanding context. As Becker (1952) stated in his classic study "The Career of the Chicago Public

School Teacher", poor schools obviously get worse and worse because good teachers transfer out and high turnover rates make them even less desirable places to be. This scenario provides little hope for all children receiving equal access to quality education.

The common pattern of exit and re-entry in teaching was an important element in these teachers' lives and is often considered one of the real benefits of a teaching career. This may be misleading, however, as this option may not be unique to teaching. All participants who returned to teaching participated in additional training and/or entered at lower level positions, such as substitutes, to get back into the system. This procedure and the flat career structure, more than unique elements of teaching, appeared to be the real difference between teaching and other careers. It is difficult to imagine a professional career where, with additional training and a willingness to start at a lower level, practicing professionals could not eventually re-enter their field, especially if they were willing to accept a salary of $25,000.

The more salient difference between teaching and other careers may be that teachers enjoy teaching, itself, and do not see it as a stepping stone to other positions such as administration. They are not particularly interested in rising in the system, just in doing a good job in their teaching.

The more unique and important characteristic of the teaching profession for these participants was the fact that schools, and so possible teaching positions, are found in almost every community. As participants moved to new communities, often in response to their spouses' career plans, there was always the possibility of securing a teaching position. This was a very attractive professional advantage.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction, as described in Chapter 4, was related to many factors in the school. Colleagues, administrators, children's needs, and parental involvement all interacted to make the schools good places for teachers and children to work together or difficult places for them to be. Teachers always gained great satisfaction from seeing children learn. The value of this teaching reward was emphasized over and over during the interviews. There were, however, different times in the lives of these 18 teachers when various other aspects of their responsibilities brought them satisfaction. Participants' attitudes in this study were consistent with the findings of Hunt & Saul (1975) that age and tenure had a positive, linear relationship to overall job satisfaction. The longer teachers had been in a particular setting the more they appeared to like it. This, of course, was related to the quality of the setting. When in very poor teaching environments, teachers looked for other alternatives. When they found themselves in very positive teaching environments, they attempted to stay. As they gained experience, their teaching choices increased and they acquired teaching positions in better schools, where satisfaction with their teaching increased.

Almost all of the participants were presently in schools where they could function happily and successfully. They enjoyed interactions with students, spent more than 40 hours a week on their work, and often assumed additional roles on committees within the school and district. Choosing a sample of teachers who had more than eight years' experience obviously influenced the likelihood of finding some of these attributes. Nevertheless, participants generally were very positive about teaching.

Although personal freedom of time during the school day is almost nonexistent for elementary school teachers, to the point that teachers find it

hard to get to the bathroom, there is a type of autonomy in teaching. Most teachers feel that when they shut their classroom door, they have a good deal of freedom. Part of the frustration classroom teachers felt from the emphasis on test-taking was the loss of some of this autonomy in the classroom. Autonomy was lost by having to conform to a rigid curriculum, defined by what was on the test, as well as by losing the time that had to be committed to this externally-imposed curriculum, test-taking skills, and taking the test itself. Positive teaching situations include not only good teaching conditions, but autonomy and control of one's classroom.

Career Satisfaction

Although they loved teaching, many participants said that, if they were entering the workforce now when more opportunities were open to women, they very well might make different decisions. When they became discouraged by limited finances or other difficult situations, the opportunity to be with their children and families was the most important factor that stopped them from investigating other careers. It is unclear whether, if they did not so highly value this feature of teaching and did not have to consider giving it up, they would stay in teaching. The participants in this study were above-average teachers, recognized by their colleagues for their outstanding work. If such a large percentage of really good teachers would have considered other careers if they felt they had the option, who is it that will be attracted to the profession of teaching in the future, as more attractive options exist and are understood? This question is not new, but the data from this study certainly raise this concern once again.

Career Stages

As indicated in Chapter 4, teachers in this study described very clearly the career stages found in the literature. Almost every study of career stages (e.g. Burden, 1986) describes three major stages, identified by these teachers as surviving, growing, and competent. Evidence of a number of other stages, including career frustration and stable and stagnant were also present. As Burke et al. (1987) suggested, career stages are influenced by life stages as well as career experiences. Most of the teachers in this study had their own children while they were still in the early (surviving) or second (growing) career stages. For some who stopped teaching, this was a welcome escape from an exhausting survival mode in difficult circumstances. For others, it was just the next step in their life stages.

Whether they left teaching or not, all the teachers who had children claimed their own children had a significant effect on their understanding of teaching and children's needs. Obviously, having one's own children is not required to reach the competent career stage, as evidenced by Kate, a competent teacher who had no children, or Judy, who had had her children after teaching for 20 years. It seems, however, that the experience afforded by having one's own children may be particularly potent for teachers who are still in the surviving or growing career stages. Teachers also echoed Newman's (1978) findings that, as they grew older, they felt they had become more flexible and interacted on a more personal level with their students.

Different foci of concern identified by Fuller & Bown (1975) also were described by some of the participating teachers. They related that when they first started teaching, they were concerned with survival and having the students like them. They moved from this into wanting to perform well, to do a good job teaching. Eventually they forgot about themselves and began to

see students as individuals. Their concerns changed from what they were presenting to what the students were experiencing. Life stages and career stages appear to interact as teachers mature.

Life Stages

In descriptions of their own lives, participants indicated, as Burack (1984) described, a difference between life stages and career stages. Most participants' lives followed a common pattern of early marriage, career involvement, child-rearing, sometimes divorce, professional re-entry, and higher levels of career involvement. Donald Super's (1980) use of a rainbow to depict the simultaneous occurrence of life roles was helpful in depicting the interactions of participants' life-roles. During their early teaching and later teaching, they had extra time and energy, which they willingly spent on their teaching. When they were in the middle of child-rearing, they had less time and energy, but developed a closer contact with children.

Teachers' descriptions of what they learned from having children corresponded with the two basic elements in the passage in Lightfoot's (1983) chapter in the Handbook of Teaching and Policy that first interested me in qualitative research because the passage spoke so clearly to my own experience. The first was a change in their understanding of what it meant to nurture a child, from holding on, to holding on and letting go. The second change occurred in how they viewed students in their care. When conflicts arose with a child, they began to consider how they would want their own child treated in a similar situation, and they almost always found they became gentler in their treatment of children.

The high value participants placed on being with their children as they were growing up explains one reason for Walker, Tausky & Oliver's (1982)

finding that males and females differed on the value placed on the convenience aspects of work, with women more concerned about convenience than men. Women participants in this study often had the majority of the childcare and homemaking responsibilities in their families, and so convenience was an important factor in their jobs. Without a doubt, the most important and satisfying personal-life/career interaction for these participants was the ability to be available for their children after school and in the summer. This reflects an additional, perhaps cultural, predisposition of women toward child-rearing.

One trend worthy of note was the reduction in recent years in the amount of time taken off from teaching for child-rearing. The older participants in this study had often stayed at home for 10-15 years when their children were young. The younger teachers more often had taken a year or less off when their children were born. Given the exhaustion involved in dealing with young children and the fact that the support systems in teaching that help teachers deal with their own children have not changed in the last 20 years, the energy required to uphold this dual role must come either out of the teachers' personal lives or from their teaching. This fact emphasizes the need for additional support structures in schools to help teachers deal with their own children. On-site day care, liberal parental leave, and teamed responsbilities all would support the teachers' desire to care for their own children, as well as to be able to give full attention to their work.

Life stages also were influenced by specific crises such as death of loved ones or divorce. In listening to participants' stories of their lives and careers, the difference between the complexity of issues dealt with in their lives and the public image of teachers was striking. Often teachers are viewed as people who don't really live in the real world because they deal with children all day,

are finished work at 3:30, and have the summer off. In addition to the ten-hour days most teachers put in, they also experienced personal life crises much like anyone else. In many cases, initial descriptions of childhood were pleasant, but later details of alcoholic parents and/or spouses, poverty, rejection, divorce, and struggles with their own children (death, eating disorders, and psychological illness) provided a more vivid account of individuals overcoming difficulties and persevering through tragedy. Although these experiences frequently disrupted the participants' teaching for periods of time, each believed that they had grown stronger and more empathetic because of the experiences.

The three mechanisms for relating work to non-work identified by Sorcinelli & Near (1987), spillover, compensation, and segmentation, were all described by participants in this study. Spillover of work into home life, or of personal problems into work, was described by almost all the participants. Sandy and Tammy both indicated that, when they were struggling at home, they compensated by putting more time and effort into being perfect at work. Kate reported that, when she felt she was getting eaten up by her work, she tried to segment her life, departing for home at 5:00 p.m. and leaving the rest of her work at school.

Data from this study provide increased support for the position of Watts (1980), in which personal development is held to be just as important as professional development in staff development programs. One form of personal development, self-awareness, is obviously an important element in reflective teaching. In addition, Sprinthall and Thies-Sprinthall (1983) have described a positive relationship between a teacher's own conceptual level and the use of effective teaching skills. It was quite clear from these teachers' stories that their attitudes and teaching behaviors in the classroom had as

much or more to do with their own life experiences as they had to do with their professional training.

The numbers of teachers affected by loved ones' difficulties with alcohol was surprising to me, but not to a number of teachers to whom I reported this finding. The participants who had sought help obviously grew into a greater awareness of themselves and the effect these experiences had on their lives. It was not clear, however, how much they understood about the effect these experiences might have had on their interactions in the classroom. For those who merely mentioned the experience, it is difficult to tell what level of awareness they had of its effect on their lives at all. I have made a new commitment to encourage preservice teachers to seek early counseling help in dealing with problems in their own backgrounds, rather than trying to shut them up in a box on the shelf, only to have them pop open again years later in struggles with a spouse or child.

Commitment to Teaching

Listening to the participants in this study talk about their love for their work was inspiring. The passion with which they described teaching and the special reward of seeing a child learn was thrilling. The participants appeared to be competent people who had a real desire to make the world a better place for all children. They believed that people should enjoy their work and spend their lives doing things that they like to do. These are the teachers who should be recruiting young people into teaching through their own passion for their work. Unfortunately, several felt that it was irresponsible to encourage young people to go into teaching, because of the difficulties that inadequate salaries caused their families.

The themes described as common to all teachers supported the interrelationship of teachers' lives and careers as well as highlighting issues related to teacher compliance, career pathways, and self-awareness. Differences between classroom teachers and specialists underscored additional areas of celebration and concern.

Differences Between Specialists and Classroom Teachers

Several differences between the experiences of classroom teachers and specialists were highlighted by the data collected in this study. Work environment characteristics, subject status, and respect for each other all varied for these two groups and caused different stresses for the different participants.

Workplace Characteristics

One of the differences between specialists and classroom teachers was their descriptions of the work environment. Classroom teachers often were frustrated by pressures to produce good test scores and the emphasis this placed on "teaching to the test". They rarely complained, however, about the size of classes they taught, facilities, or even the time available for teaching. Specialists, on the other hand usually felt that they had more freedom to teach what they felt was appropriate, but were restricted by large class sizes, sharing facilities, and very limited time with students. Meeting students for 25 minutes a day, or for 45 minutes once every three days, left them feeling that they had to cut out more of their curriculum than they could leave in. Even at their very best, they had little hope of being effective in actually teaching the skills of their subject area. They had to be content with

introducing content rather than developing mastery. In many cases this reality was hard to accept.

Subject Status

There is no question that the data from this study indicate that there is different status afforded different subjects within the school. Academic subjects are afforded high status as compared with the arts and physical education. Both specialists and classroom teachers described the situation clearly. About half of the classroom teachers appeared to regard the special subject areas as extras or frills, most valuable for the teacher planning time they offered, while the other half appeared to support the special subject areas as a valued part of the curriculum. Classroom teachers felt their own work was obviously valued and felt little stress or concern for their jobs. Specialists, on the other hand, because of working conditions and attitudes of others in the school, always felt a marginal status. They felt frustrated by the low value attached to their work. Often they sought value outside the classroom, either through special programs at school or outside work. Music teachers' church work often provided an opportunity to nurture a sense of self-worth. Although at secondary levels physical education teachers often find their work in coaching valued, elementary physical education teachers generally did not have these outside sources of value related to their work. This may be part of the reason Sharon went back to school, Rachel developed outside interests in chorus and folk dancing, and Meg was still looking for someone to value her work. Low status frustrated specialists and caused extra stress in their lives.

Respect and Valuing Each Other

For the most part teachers spoke highly of their colleagues. They respected them, felt that they learned from each other, and enjoyed each other's company. Although this respect was not universal, they indicated that the number of really good teachers was much higher than most people thought, but despaired that it was so difficult to get rid of the few really poor ones who tended to ruin teachers' reputations. Strong collegial ties were obviously an important part of a quality school.

The difficulty comes from the distance described between the classroom teachers and the specialists (physical education and others). The three teachers in each school obviously respected each other as individuals. In addition, three of the classroom teachers in this study generally appeared to highly value the contribution of the specialists, but all participants indicated that such support was not universal in their school. Even in their support of each other, teachers from the three areas could rarely describe what the other persons' jobs were like. Specialists, in general, felt outnumbered in their schools, often felt like "the low person on the totem pole", and wondered about the security of their jobs.

The schedule arrangement of having classes taught by a specialist during a classroom teacher's planning time was often bemoaned as the perceived raison d'etre for their presence. Schedules often involved specialists' teaching more than one class at a time and rarely provided any breaks between groups of students to make changes in equipment, even when the classes were of widely different grade levels. Although specialists had sometimes been in worse situations than they presently experienced, they were constantly worried that their teaching situations could go from barely possible to impossible because of a lack of understanding that they were

actually teaching students, not just offering an enrichment activity so classroom teachers could have a break.

In addition to the lack of support from the majority of classroom teachers in the schools, specialist teachers told fewer stories of inspiring colleagues and only on rare occasions described finding a partner or group of teachers to work with who helped share the load and stimulated their professional development. For the most part they felt they had to do whatever they did on their own. Among physical education specialists (who more often had another teacher in their area than the other specialists), for every instance of good colleagues there also were reports of being frustrated by the work of other colleagues.

Physical education specialists also were faced with the fact that if they wanted just to teach physical education it had to be at the elementary school level. In Texas, teaching secondary physical education without coaching simply did not exist. Middle and high school teachers were hired to coach and did little teaching. Teachers in other subject areas who really wanted to focus on their content could teach in the middle school and actually teach that subject matter. Physical education teachers did not have that option. This reinforced a feeling of low esteem for their subject area, and provided a source of job dissatisfaction.

Incompetent Teaching by Colleagues

Physical education teachers, unlike other teachers, described frustration at having to cope with incompetent teaching by colleagues. There are three possible reasons that physical education teachers reported this unique concern. One is that there are fewer choices of colleagues when compared to classroom teachers. A second reason is that poor teaching is more visible

because physical education teachers often teach side by side, sharing the gym or outdoor areas, rather than alone behind a closed door. The third reason relates to the low status of physical education in the school.

Physical education teachers probably experience frustration working with poor colleagues more frequently than classroom teachers because there are fewer physical education teachers in a school, and so a smaller selection of colleagues with whom to work. Although there also are classroom teachers who do poor work, since each classroom teacher usually has the possibility of interacting with ten or more colleagues teaching within one grade level of their own, the weak colleagues can be ignored and the strong colleagues enjoyed.

In addition, physical education classes are often doubled up in a facility, so it is possible to see a colleague's work. Classroom teachers teach in privacy and thus rarely ever observe what is actually taking place in another class. When there is more than one music teacher, they are isolated in separate classrooms, and so interaction between teachers can be high if they appreciate each other's work and minimal if they don't. In physical education, where several classes may occupy the same gym or field, not only is it possible to observe the other class, but what happens in one class affects what goes on in the other class. When one teacher is providing open recreation time while another is trying to teach, the students being instructed are very distracted. It is very difficult to keep attention to a task when chaos is nearby. Thus poor quality teaching on the part of colleagues is particularly stressful and discouraging to the physical education specialist.

Another reason for the frustration with incompetent teaching by colleagues involves a vicious cycle centered around the problem of low status. When envisioning physical education, many people think back to

their own experience in school. Since recess often was the only time of vigorous motor activity during the elementary school day, many people (teachers, parents, and administrators) equate physical education with recess time. This image of physical education as recess leads to low expectations and related low status. Because of this low status there are poor working conditions (schedule, class size, facilities, etc.). Poor working conditions make it difficult to attract good teachers. Weak teachers, faced with poor conditions, are not capable of performing well and eventually give up trying to teach and, instead, supervise the equivilant of a recess period. This spawns a continuation of the cycle.

Administrators also often perceive physical education as little more than recess, due to their own backgrounds. Since many administrators come out of the teaching ranks, they often mirror the compliant attitude of teachers in dealing with the school board and teacher allotments. With the many problems to be addressed everyday, since classroom teacher and parental pressure are not felt on the problems relating to elementary physical education, these problems receive low priority and consequently little attention. Even when administrators do have a clear understanding of what would constitute good teaching in physical education, they also appreciate the difficulty of the situation, know they have few resources to improve it, and so refrain from insisting that poor teachers improve. They anticipate the response, "I need better working conditions." Incapable of improving the conditions, they turn away, pretending they don't notice what is going on. Good teachers have great difficulty conducting classes, while others "roll out the ball and let the children play", and the good teachers eventually burn out. Weak teachers, seeing administrators ignoring poor teaching, feel even less valued and teach even less. This destructive cycle is demoralizing for

everyone involved, but most directly for the teachers who still struggle to do competent work.

Summary of Findings Related to Research Questions

In response to the first question posed in this study, "In what ways do elementary school teachers describe the interaction of their personal lives and teaching careers over time?" there are several general assertions that can be made. First, lives and careers are inextricably intertwined in so many ways that one cannot honestly be described without reference to the other. Teaching is a profession that makes the divisions between personal life and work hazy at best, and in many cases almost indistinguishable.

Second, the most visible and obvious interactions may not be the most potent. Items such as personal interests brought into teaching and the spillover of work into home time are continually present, yet not nearly as potent in the long run as who the teacher is as a person. Attitudes toward authority and norms such as sex role expectations, and personal values, which derive from a whole host of background experiences, provide a deeper and more pervasive influence on teaching careers.

Finally, the joy of having a job doing something you love allows life and career to be one whole rather than two separate entities where work is performed in order to support a separate activity called living. For some teachers, at least, work and personal life are all part of one whole.

In answer to the second question, "What aspects of their job structure do elementary school teachers identify as affecting their personal-life/career interactions?", there appeared to be two categories of responses. The first category includes responses that are related to job structures embedded in

teaching itself, that are common to all teachers. The second category includes responses that are related to the unique job structures of specialist teachers.

The most direct and pervasive influence of job structure on teacher's lives arose from the fact that the activities required in teaching could not be completed in the 8 hours of the designated 7:30 to 3:30 work day. It simply could not be done. The inevitable consequence was that professional obligations controlled some portion of private life, and did so without respite for the entire school year.

In addition, the nature of the job required that teachers were faced with the physical demands of being on their feet all day and not even being able to go to the bathroom when they wanted. These conditions produced recognizable negative effects of their health. The flex-time characteristic of teaching, on the other hand, allowed participants the opportunity to spend regular and extended time with children and partners. This feature of the job structure was highly valued because it had consequences for life outside the school.

For specialists, the job structure provided the opportunity to have, as their daily work, participation in a content that they loved. This aspect of the job again reinforced the lack of distinction between life and career. Conversely, the specialists, in particular, existed in a setting where the content they loved often was not afforded respect. As a result they had to deal on a daily basis with difficult work conditions embedded in the job structure. This caused them to doubt their ability to be effective, and so increased personal stress and dissatisfaction--feelings which often came to influence their interactions with friends and family outside of school as well as their career satisfaction. One compensation within the job structure of specialists, however, (and one <u>not</u> shared by classroom colleagues) was the added

satisfaction of knowing students for 6 or 7 years, and thus having a much richer picture of their growth and development.

Implications for Schools and Teachers

Four major implications arise from this study. First, personal lives and careers are so entwined that staff development must provide differentiated opportunities for teachers, based on life and career states as well as career stages. Second, addressing self-awareness and the personal growth of the teachers must be considered one of the primary goals in staff development programs and a personal goal for every teacher. Third, the difficult working conditions of specialists within the school are associated with low status of the content and are not likely to change without classroom teachers and administrators caring more about these areas of education. Finally, a substantial amount of poor teaching continues to exist in physical education, and until something is done about this, many classroom teachers, parents, and students will continue to develop their visions of physical education from these negative examples and the status of physical education will remain low.

Staff Development

It is clear from the ways elementary school teachers described the interactions between their personal lives and careers, that the two are inextricably entwined. Differentiated staff development based on career stages (Allain, 1985; Burden & Wallace, 1983; Newman, Burden, & Applegate, 1980; Watts, 1980), as well as life and career states, is essential to teachers' professional growth. Although it is important to differentiate the staff

development available at different stages in teachers' careers, this is not sufficient personalizing of the experience.

Depending on what is going on in a teacher's life at any one time, different forms and content of staff development may be appropriate. Even in the competent career stage, where independent study is sometimes advocated for staff development, when individuals are facing serious difficulties at home and are throwing themselves into their school work to compensate for problems elsewhere, intensive independent professional study might not be the best mode for them at that time. Similarly, at different times in their personal lives, teachers may be more ready to deal with areas of self-awareness and personal growth, such as reflecting on their own contributions to sex-role stereotyping in the classroom, or the effect growing up with an alcoholic parent might have had on their personal interaction patterns.

Current aspects of both personal life and teaching situations need to be considered, along with career stage and life stage, in determining appropriate staff development. Preservice and inservice programs alike should help teachers become aware of the interaction of these aspects of their lives, as well as provide the appropriate avenues for dealing with the specific needs of various individuals.

Need for Self-Awareness

Self-awareness and personal development goals must be considered essential and of primary importance in staff development programs. Given the importance of teacher expectations in relation to student performance, coupled with the typical personal backgrounds of compliance and sex-role stereotyped expectations that teachers bring to their careers, it is essential that

teachers be encouraged to reflect on the effects their background and beliefs have on their teaching behaviors. Participants indicated that successfully dealing with serious difficulties in their personal lives often required them to seek professional help. Virtually all the participants in this study, at some point in their lives, were helped by some form of personal counseling. Bea demonstrated an exceptional perception of the importance of self-awareness in teachers.

> **Bea** I feel my philosophy most definitely has a tremendous impact on how I present or how I deal with children. I have thought a lot about this when I am at school and when I'm with my colleagues, and I see what's going on with them. I want so badly to say, 'If you can be okay with yourself then you are going to be okay with your teaching. ...What you feel as a person is going to be picked up by anybody that goes by you. Every little dog, every little cat, every little child is going to feel it. ...Right before I go back to teach after lunch, which is a very chaotic time...I have to really work on getting myself real calm so when [my fifth grade] comes in it will be okay for me. It's really hard with all the confusion going on. I spend a lot of time on myself, really so that I will be able to reach out to these kids.

As Howey (1985) has pointed out, one purpose of staff development should be continuing understanding and discovery of self. Staff development should include opportunities for teachers to learn about themselves and their personal attitudes and choices. Kate's exploring her co-dependency, those having marital problems dealing with relationship issues, or even shy teachers' learning about this attribute of their personalities are examples of areas in which personal knowledge could affect the quality of interaction in the classroom. District employee benefit packages should always include mental health benefits, as well as the traditional medical and dental coverage. Menu-style optional plans, wherein employees can choose from additional benefit options to suit their personal needs, would be extremely helpful.

Schools should encourage and provide facilities for support groups of all kinds, so that these are available in the community when teachers need them. The development of self-awareness not only affects the ability of the teacher to reflect on daily teaching behaviors, but provides an increased level of self-confidence that allows individuals to advocate for change.

Need for Classroom Teachers and Administrators to Value Content

The low status of special-area subjects was one of the most common themes identified by specialist teachers as impacting their work. This low status was characterized by limited value associated with the subject matter by many classroom teachers, a lack of understanding by some classroom teachers of the level of planning and curriculum specificity used by specialist teachers, and limited contact time designated with each class that resulted in high overall student teacher ratios and numbers of classes taught. Taking as an example the insight and awareness about physical education shown by Sarah, a classroom teacher in this study, a number of strategies can be suggested for influencing the attitudes of others toward the value of the special area subjects. It would be useful to teach these strategies to preservice as well as inservice teachers.

First, specialists must be convinced of the importance of being proactive in reducing their isolation by developing personal relationships with the other teachers in the school. In the end, it is through interaction on a personal level that new value systems are adopted. Specialist teachers are often separated from classroom teachers by the scheduling of breaks, as well as by physical distance. If they are to influence the thinking of others they must first begin to talk to them.

Second, specialists must help provide a vision of their content area and it's importance to others. As long as incompetent colleagues are "rolling out the ball" in physical education it will be difficult to change the vision outsiders have of the contributions of physical education. Without a clear vision and well-articulated description it will be impossible. As Meg found, however, if you keep working, eventually attempts to share the vision pay off.

In the current scenario described by teachers, one of the most valuable results of having specialists in the school is ignored. Teachers who know all the children and have a global view of what is going on in the school can provide valuable insights, as well as make a significant contribution to communication and school climate through their daily interactions. Specialist teachers need to highlight this contribution in the minds of administrators and fellow teachers.

Even though there is an obvious need for specialist teachers to develop skills and strategies which will enable them to create change in the status of their subject matter in the school, they cannot be expected to bring about these changes by themselves. University faculty must develop the same skills and make the same efforts to develop personal relationships, and to communciate the vision of their field with teacher educators in other subjects and with the faculty in educational administration who prepare principals. Without a concerted effort at all levels of education to create a vision of the importance of what are considered as "special subject areas" as integral parts of education, specialists and their content will remain relegated to second or third class status, and the resulting workplace problems will continue as permanent features of the specialist's career.

Elimination of Poor Teaching

Descriptions by the participants in this study, of the difficulty in providing quality instruction while teaching with an incompetent colleague, highlight the need for school administrators to assume a more active role in ensuring that quality teaching is taking place in all areas of the school curriculum. Critical here, of course, is helping administrators who have power over workplace environments to have a clear picture of what quality teaching is in specialist environments. Ignoring, or not being able to recognize, the quality of instruction in any class affects the children and their expectations for learning. Allowing children to experience poor teaching in any area on a regular basis is inexcusable. If conditions are such that quality teaching is impossible, it is the responsibility of the administrator, as well as the teacher, to advocate for change. If teachers are not doing a quality job they need to be helped to improve or be removed. Schedules and class assignments must be adjusted so that specialist teachers are provided opportunity to actually teach and not be so overloaded by numbers of students or poor scheduling that they cannot be effective. Good teachers cannot be expected to endure the stress and dissatisfaction that comes with trying to provide quality instruction against overwhelming odds. There is too high a price to pay for this disappointment and dissatisfaction in their personal lives. The attrition produced by such work conditions has the effect of progressively reducing the number of competent teachers and leaving those teachers who don't care.

Important Issue Raised Not Related to the Questions of This Study

The interaction of the career pathways and personal lives of the teachers in this study highlighted the uneven distribution of wealth as a

critical problem in our nation's schools. As a result of the extensive and urgent needs of the disadvantaged children, limited resources, and the difficulties of dealing with transient students and faculty, schools in areas of depression and poverty were difficult schools in which to teach. Yet they were often the very schools in which beginning teachers were placed. The children in these schools are underserved, not only by their own educational backgrounds and the limited resources in the school, but also by the unrefined skills of beginning teachers, and the insufficient human energy needed to handle all the turmoil that accompanies high turnover rates. Research on the prevalence and effects of this situation is needed to direct teacher and administrator assignment practices as well as related policies.

Conclusion

The most salient finding about life/career interactions that emerged from these interviews is not a specific item, but the understanding that there indeed are many interactions between teachers' personal lives and their careers. In some cases, it is very direct, such as time missed because of home emergencies, or extra time spent when an individual throws him/herself into work in order feel a positive sense of accomplishment when surrounded by personal problems. At other times it is more global, as when self-awareness increases as a result of either personal tragedies or positive accomplishments. All of these experiences affect the understanding of others so necessary in the classroom.

The distinctions between specialists and classroom teachers disappear when hearing the stories of life experiences from these teachers. They were much more similar than different. The situations within which they teach,

however, are very different. Poor working conditions and low status make it difficult for specialists to continue to provide quality teaching year after year.

Seeing teachers walking down the hall or standing in front of a classroom of children, we rarely perceive all the strains and celebrations that make up their past and present lives inside and outside of the school walls. Daily interactions provide only hints of the complex set of experiences that come together to make up their being. Yet these elements are vital and significant features of their professional being.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

WRITTEN CONSENT FORM

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' LIVES AND CAREERS: AN INTERVIEW STUDY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION SPECIALISTS, OTHER SUBJECT SPECIALISTS, AND CLASSROOM TEACHERS

I. My name is Dolly Lambdin and I am a faculty member in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Texas at Austin. Concurrently, I am completing a doctoral program in the Physical Education Teacher Education program at the University of Massachusetts. Until the birth of my second child four years ago, when time requirements forced a reduction in professional workload, I simultaneously taught half time at an elementary school in Austin. As a result of my experiences as a teacher, as a teacher educator, and as a mother, I am interested in studying the careers of other elementary school teachers. In order to understand teachers' lives and careers, I am presently conducting a study for my dissertation by interviewing teachers about their experiences. In this study I will be interviewing eighteen elementary school teachers including six physical education specialists, six specialists not in physical education, and six classroom teachers.

II. You are being asked to be a participant in this project. After providing you with two strategies to stimulate reflection on your teaching career, I will conduct two 45-60 minute interviews with you. During the first interview you will be asked to describe your life, the various roles you have (or have had), and your experiences in teaching. I will provide some structure to the interview, but the main intent of the interview is to stimulate your own descriptions and stories about experiences as a teacher. The second interview will focus on areas you have thought about since the first interview and will allow me to raise questions and clarify points that occurred to me in reviewing your comments as well as to raise some additional questions. There are no physical discomforts associated with this study. Participants in a similar pilot study reported that they enjoyed the opportunity to reflect on their experiences. It is, of course, possible that other emotions, such as sadness or resentment, could occur.

III. The interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed. To provide anonymity, in the typed transcripts pseudonyms will replace all proper names of people, places, schools, and towns. Likewise, your identity will not be recorded in any document or shared with any other person, including other participants in the study. My goal is to analyze the materials from your interview and those of other participants in an attempt to find common themes. In addition to reporting my findings to my dissertation committee, I also plan to share excerpts from the interview transcipts with other

researchers who are interested in studying the lives of teachers. Future use of the material may take any of the following forms:

a. journal articles
b. presentations at professional meetings
c. presentations in university classes
d. use in programs for inservice teacher development

The audio tapes will be heard only by myself and a professional transcriber. Audio tapes will be kept in a locked file and destroyed or returned to you at the end of the dissertation project.

IV. While signing this form indicates your consent to participate at this time, you may withdraw from the actual interview process at any time until two weeks following the final interview.

V. Furthermore, while having consented to participate in the interview process and having done so, you may withdraw your consent to have specific excerpts from your interviews used in any printed materials or oral presentations if you notify me within two weeks following your final interview (926-9650--home or 471-1540--UT).

VI. In signing this form you are agreeing to the use of the materials from your interviews as indicated in III above. If I wish to use the materials from your interviews in any way not consistent with what is stated in III, I will contact you to obtain your consent.

VII. In signing this form you also are stipulating that you will make no financial claims on me for the use of the material in your interviews. At your request I will be happy to supply you with audiotape copies of your interviews. A copy of this consent form will be provided for your records.

I, _____, have read the above statement and agree to participate as a interviewee under the conditions stated above.

_____ _____

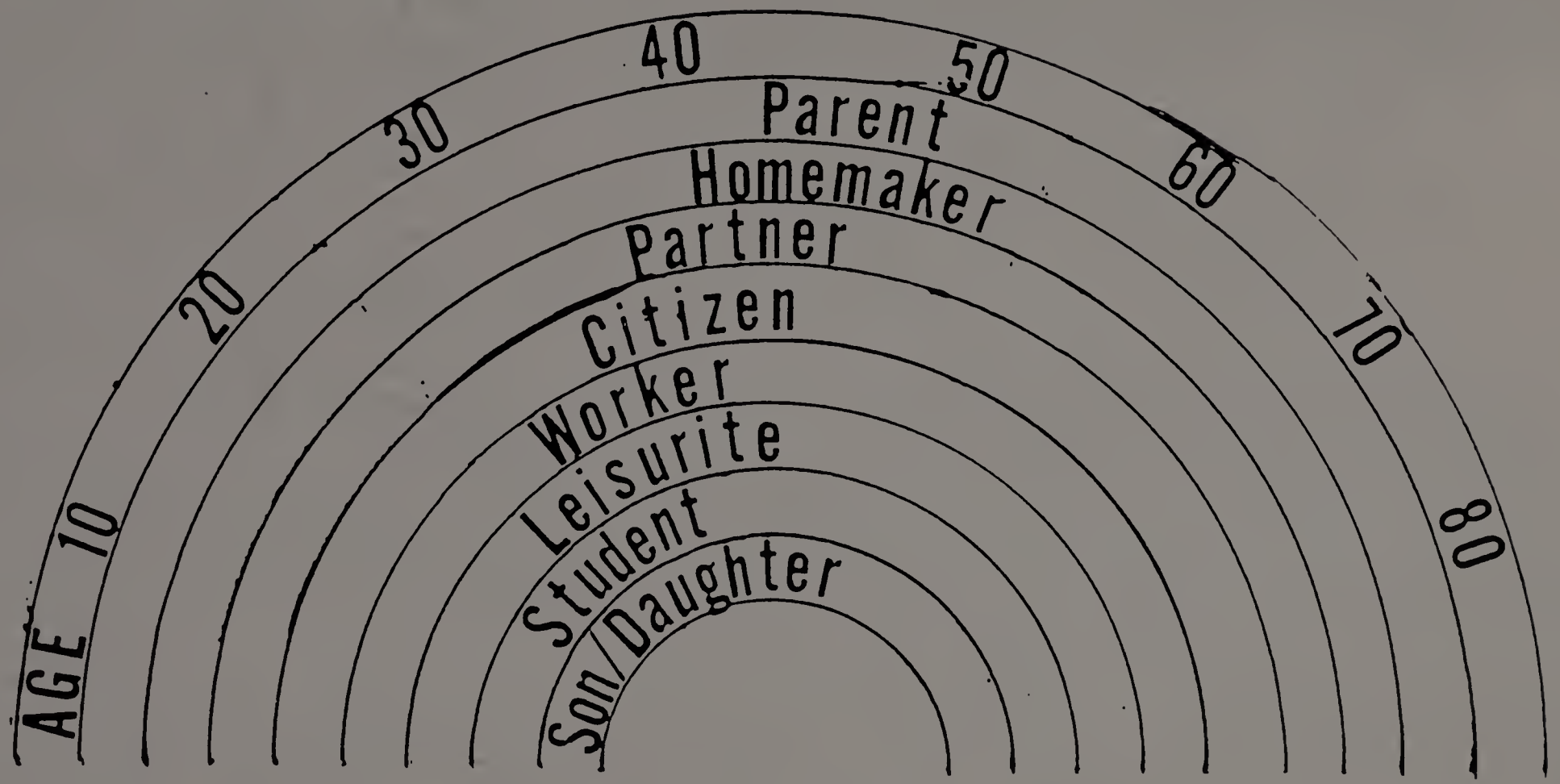
Signature of participant Date

_____

Interviewer-Dolly Lambdin

Rainbow of Teachers' Lives and Careers

Instructions: Each of the bands of the rainbow represent different roles in your life. With a pencil please shade each band to indicate the intensity of the role during various time periods. The numbers round the edge indicate years of your life. If a role was very intense for your between the ages of 20 and 25 shade it darkly, if it was not very important shade it lightly during that time. When you complete this rainbow there may be a variety of shadings within each band as well as between different bands.



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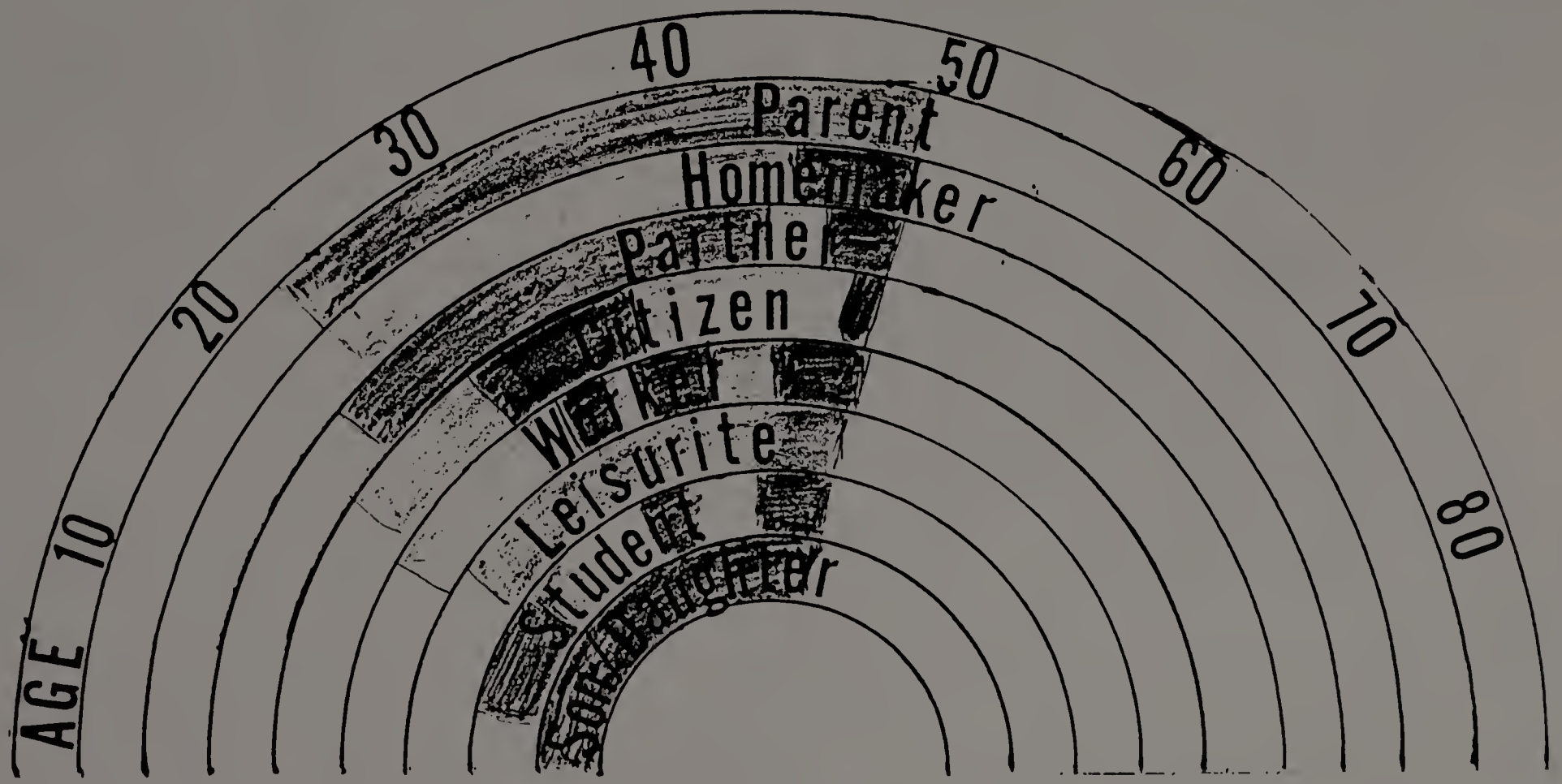

Teaching Career Timeline

In the space below indicate some general characteristics about the situations that you have taught in over the course of your career. Draw a line to indicate changes in schools, grade levels, or other major apsects of your position.

Year	74	75	77	78	80	81	82	83	86	87	88	89	90	91
School Initials	BE	BE	WE	WE	Gymnastics				F. N. ELEM					
Position	ELEM P.E BASEBALL		ELEM P.E						P. E.					
School size & Characteristics	K-6. 1,0 ROOF		2 SCHOOLS room		3-6 yr olds 6-8/class				500 SOME UPPER, TRANSIENT		MIXED		POPULATION SOME MIDDLE	

In the space below identify roles that you have experienced during different times in your teaching. These roles could be personal or areas of teaching skill that have been meaningful to you. The dashes are placed to coincide with the timeline above. After identifying the roles shade as you did in the rainbow exercise to indicate the importance or intensity of the role during different times.

Roles or skills	74				80	81	82	83	86					91
TEACHER														
COACH														
ADMINISTRATOR														
COUNSELOR														

APPENDIX E

PILOT STUDY 1

Participant: Elementary physical education teacher (white, male) with 20+ years experience.

Date: Nov. 1987.

Interview format: This was a one hour audio-taped interview which used an open ended format guided by the basic question "Tell me about your teaching career".

Purpose:

1. To try an open-ended interview format.

2. To begin to investigate the topic of teachers' careers.

3. To become familiar with the mechanics of data collection using interviews:

    a. construction of consent form
    b. use of tape recorder
    c. interviewing skills
    d. transcription.

Information gained:

1. I enjoyed the general interview format of encouraging someone to tell his story and felt it provided interesting and useful information.

2. The topic (teachers' careers) was of interest to me.

3. The transcription of the tape was time consuming.

4. As an interviewer I allowed the teacher to tell his own story and provided probes, but did not provide much guidance to stay on a specific topic.

APPENDIX F

PILOT STUDY 2

Participants: Two elementary physical education teachers (one white male, one white female) each with 20+ years experience.

Date: March 1988.

Interview format: Phenomenological (Earl Seidman) This study involved three 90 minute interviews with each participant. During the first interview participants were instructed to tell about their lives and teaching careers up until the present time. During the second interview they were instructed to describe their present teaching and during the third interview they were instructed to describe the meaning for them of the experiences related in the first two interviews.

Purposes:

1. To investigate phenomenological interviewing as a technique.

2. To improve work on a consent form.

3. To begin to consider possible themes in physical education teachers' lives.

Information gained:

1. I continued to feel that interviewing was a useful technique.

2. The format used provided a lot of time for present day experience (one entire 90 minute interview), but little time for the rest of the career since all of life to the present was incorporated into one interview.

3. Participants described meaning throughout the process and the third interview was mostly repetitive information.

4. A great deal of interesting material was collected, but much of it was not relevant to my topic.

5. The quality of tapes is extremely important for transcription.

6. Each 90 minute interview required about six hours for transcription.

7. Although there were certain similarities in the two teachers' experiences, interviews with more people would be required to establish the existance of any themes.

APPENDIX G

PILOT STUDY 3

Participants: Three elementary school teachers (white women) with 10-20 years experience.

Date: May 1988.

Interview format: This study involved one 90 minute interview using the Rainbow Chart and Teaching Timeline as a guide. At the beginning of the interview, participants were shown Donald Super's (1980) rainbow of life roles (Appendix B). They were then instructed to describe their own lives in terms of the roles provided or any roles of their own choosing. Participants used a pencil to shade each band (role) of the rainbow with varying intensity to indicate the magnitude of that role during various times in their lives (Appendix C). This provided a framework for leading to the descriptions of the interaction of the various roles. When this description was completed, the participants were given a time line (Appendix D) on which to describe their teaching career. A list of teaching roles were also provided in bands and participants were once again invited to shade the bands and describe the intensity of interaction of the various teaching roles during various times in their careers.

Purposes:

1. To try out a shorter, more structured, interview format.

2. To experiment with the use of the rainbow chart and teaching timeline aids to direct the interview.

Information Gained:

1. The Rainbow Chart and Teaching Timeline were useful in directing the participants in describing career and life interactions.

2. Participants liked the aids and said they were helpful in structuring the interview.

3. Both the single interview format and completing the aids during the interview limited time for reflection.

4. Roles printed on the Teaching Timeline seemed to constrain participants.

APPENDIX H

PILOT STUDY 4

Participants: Two elementary school teachers- One (white male) physical education teacher with four years experience and one (white female) first grade teacher with two years experience.

Date: May 1989.

Interview format: The procedure consisted of an initial meeting, one 90 minute interview, and one 60 minute interview. During the initial meeting the study was described and the consent form reviewed and signed. Each participant was then given the Rainbow Chart and Teaching Timeline aids and instructed how to complete them. The Teaching Timeline had blank bands where career-related roles could be recorded and participants were instructed to identify their own roles. The Rainbow Chart had six life roles identified and spaces for additional ones to be added. Participants were instructed to describe the intensity of each role during various time periods by shading in the bands. This was to be done prior to the first interview.

The participants were informed that the first interview would then entail verbally describing their lives and careers using the charts as a guide. The second interview would used for additions, clarifications and summaries. During this initial meeting the first interview was scheduled. A site for the interview was determined which provided privacy and comfort. Interviews ended up taking place at two different university sites.

At the first interview participants were invited to describe their lives using the two aids. Probes were provided to obtain additional detail. At the conclusion of the first interview the second interview was scheduled and the participant instructed to make a note of any thoughts which occurred between interviews which was relevant to the topic. The second interview started with participants relating stories or other information they had thought about since the first interview. Each participant contributed at least one or two additional thoughts. I then requested additional information and clarification on areas that I had identified while listening to the tape of the first interview. A series of general questions began to develop which I then incorporated into the second interview. At the conclusion of this final interview the participants were asked to provide feedback on the entire process including my behavior as interviewer.

Purpose: To gather information on:

1. Length of interview.

2. Usefulness of the rainbow chart and teaching timeline aids being done at home and brought completed to the interview

3. Usefulness of an initial meeting and a reflection interview.

4. Acceptability of outlining and selective transcription in dealing with the data.

5. The interviewing skills of the investigator.

Information gathered:

1. Interviews were longer than needed for these teachers- two 45 minute interviews would have been sufficient.

2. The teachers liked both aids and felt doing them at home provided time for reflection and reduced anxiety about the first interview. They also liked the freedom to identify their own roles in teaching and each added a role to the rainbow chart as well.

3. The initial interview and reflection interview were useful in providing an extended project engagement period as well as time for reflection. Data athered was relevant to the topic.

4. Outlining was not a useful transcription technique for two reasons:
   a. in order to outline I had to categorize information too early rather than allow categories to emerge from information gathered in several interviews,
   b. such large amounts of the data ended up being included that it seemed more efficient to transcribe it all at once rather than outline and then to selectively transcribe.

5. Participants indicated they felt comfortable during the interviews and that they were encouraged to tell their own story. They found the experience useful and enjoyable.

6. I learned to attend to creature comforts (eg., drinks, rest rooms, comfortable chairs, breaks to stretch etc.)

7. A list of summary questions that emerged from the second interview were useful in obtaining information in specific areas.

APPENDIX I

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

In preparation for this project it is important for me to clearly identify my own beliefs so that as a researcher I will be better able to distinguish between my own biases and the feelings and beliefs of the participants. In addition, my peer de-briefer will use this description of my background and biases to help her become watchful of areas where my beliefs rather than data gathered from participants are driving either the interviews or the analysis of the data.

I began this project by writing thirty pages of notes concerning all aspects of my development as a teacher and my life and career. I then reviewed all the information in that work, identifying the areas that I felt were specifically applicable to this project and eliminating those descriptions that concerned daily teaching experiences rather than interactions between my life and my career. Those thoughts, experiences, and opinions that were judged directly relevant to life and career interactions are included in this appendix.

This autobiographical sketch centers on four major areas: (a) how I came to choose teaching physical education for a career and thoughts about other options, (b) particular aspects of teaching physical education that impact the rest of my life, (c) aspects of my life that impact my teaching, and (d) general opinions about the place of work and careers in relation to the rest of life. I will discuss each of these in turn.

There are two ways I think about my choice of teaching as a career. The first is through active decisions and choices that I have made along the way. The second is reflection upon careers that I didn't consider possible or appropriate. I always enjoyed sports and participated on school teams. However, what attracted me to teaching physical education was not so much this athletic experience as the fact that I enjoyed playing and feeling physically competent in general. I had a number of friends who had a strong dislike for physical education classes, lacked basic motor skills, and were rarely successful in movement activities. Helping these individuals learn a motor skill was particularly rewarding for me. I was strongly committed to a helping profession from the earliest I can remember and during high school vacillated between choosing physical education teaching and social work as a career goal.

In contrast, although I've always been interested in ecology, I never considered a career in this type of public service or natural science. I do not have an explanation for this exclusion. In college, I vacillated between becoming a physical education teacher and a physical therapist. My own interest in physical therapy came partly from a desire to provide a valuable service to people with acute physical recovery needs and partly from the desire to be in a situation where I actually learned something concrete and specific. My professional preparation in teaching included many introductory

courses that I managed to complete with ease, but never felt that I knew enough when I finished them. My college advisor encouraged me to attend graduate school in curriculum and instruction, and provided descriptions of physical therapy as a routine, powerless job where one had to follow a doctor's orders and was provided with little opportunity to make decisions or use creativity.

Once I completed my masters degree I felt committed to teaching physical education. I have occasional thoughts about completing the course work necessary for classroom certification, more because I sometimes want more job flexibility than because I want to leave physical education. There is also a small part of me that is tired of struggling with the lack of prestige in teaching physical education and would like to provide curriculum to children from a position of somewhat greater esteem as a classroom teacher. I often think of returning to teaching physical education in an elementary school, but the incredibly poor teaching schedules that I see many specialists endure stops me from actually making the move.

Running through the past paragraphs is the question of prestige. It has been difficult to keep my vision of the importance of physical education bright and glowing. I get tired of the constant battle for legitimacy. I get angry at the poor programs in the schools that make this battle more difficult. I will have to keep guard on my feelings about prestige and poor programs in the course of this project.

The second area that seems relevant to this study deals with actually teaching elementary physical education. I taught elementary physical education for two years in New York City and for 10 years half time in Austin, Texas while simultaneously teaching half time at the university in a teacher preparation program. For the past four years, since the birth of my second child, I have taught half time at the university only. There are four aspects of teaching elementary physical education that were extremely important in the rest of my life: stress, organizing, success, and exercise.

The first, stress, occurred mostly early in my career when there was no indoor teaching station in the school where I taught. There was a good sized field in a park across the street that was useful, but about 5 am every morning I would find myself awake listening to see if it was raining, and if it was, racking my brain to come up with alternatives to the day's lesson. Eventually I began to plan two simultaneous units, one for outside and one for inside. Teaching in the front hallway or in the classroom was never easy, so my stress level was high. I did not enjoy this stress in my life and might have left teaching if a gym had not been provided.

A second area of stress came from the need to create and fight for every piece of the physical education program in the school. This created in me a wary, suspicious attitude where I felt I had to serve on every committee, do more and better work than anyone else, and rarely give in on principles lest the physical education program lose ground. My attitudes and commitments were useful and my program developed a good level of support from parents

and administration. Other teachers grew to respect our program and became very complimentary, but it remained outside their interest and experience. Their experiences with physical education were unimpressive at best and negative at worst, and I had to constantly work to educate them as I tried to develop the visions myself. Again this was a stressful, although positive situation, that kept me working nights and weekends most of the year.

One aspect that I thoroughly enjoyed was the tremendous organization needed to provide programs for 300 children a day. Equipment changes, evaluation systems, and lessons sequencing all sharpened my managerial and organizational skills. I enjoyed this same interest in detail at home and this aspect was a useful and fun part of teaching for me.

The most joyous aspect of my teaching has always been seeing children learn. I especially enjoy watching timid children, who previously have preferred sitting to running, begin to enjoy movement and participate in daily activities. My co-teacher and I would often marvel at changes in children who came into first grade labeled by themselves and their parents as children who would hate physical education, but began to choose active participation over sitting out.

The final aspect of my elementary school teaching that stands out as influencing my life is exercise. I was about 20 pounds overweight when I began teaching, but I lost that weight and any real need to watch calories when I began teaching elementary physical education. In general, I enjoyed the physical aspects of moving equipment around and the exercise I got working with the children. The relatively new experience of not teaching activity classes every day has made me realize how difficult it is when you have to actually reserve time each day for exercise.

These four aspects: stress from inadequate teaching space and the constant struggle for program support, the tremendous organization and management requirements of dealing with 300 plus children a day, the joy of watching children learn, and the opportunity for daily exercise represent important ways teaching physical education influenced my daily life. These might be different from the ways teaching other subjects might influence a teacher's life.

The third area of my own biography is the area in which I have noticed the greatest change in my perspective. It has to do with influences of my home life on my career.

During the course of my career development I had three obvious mentors: an undergraduate professor, my masters advisor, and the director of the physical education program where I first worked. All three were outstanding professionals who took their jobs very seriously. All three, however, also held fast to other parts of their lives. For one it was summer time spent in Montana, for another it was reserved time for his wife and family, and for the third it was reserved fishing time. As I started my own career I followed a long time family tradition of traveling to Maine in the summer and as a result turned down a number of summer employment

opportunities. During the school year I was told often by people I worked with that I was too ambitious in projects undertaken. My husband and I often stayed at school working until 7 or 8 pm weekdays, one or two weekend days, and took work home as well. We occasionally wondered what other people did with all their time. Summers, although we traveled to Maine, we always took school work with us and spent some time each day trying to be productive academically.

Seven years ago our first child was born and our lives began to change. We adjusted schedules so we could trade off child care with hired sitters. My brother-in-law aptly described the dilemma which developed: "When I'm at work I almost resent the kids because I love my work and want to keep working the long hours I used to, but when I'm at home I resent my work which takes me away from the joys of being with my family."

My own ambitions have changed tremendously since I gave birth to my children. I want to spend time with them, help them grow into secure individuals without the stress of overwhelming time commitments in other areas. I have come to believe that in our society we have put so much emphasis on careers and work that it is difficult to keep life in perspective. This attitude was epitomized by the professor's attitude in a course I took on career development. He maintained that if people obtained fulfilling jobs in an area in which they were interested, they would be happy and most of their problems would be solved. It was interesting that the majority of the class, who happened to be women, strongly disagreed, saying that the job also had to have a structure that allowed for personal development and relationships as well.

I strongly believe that employment should mesh positively with the rest of one's life. It should be seen as just one of many aspects of having a full and productive life, not the most important one. The forty hour work week was not created along with the sun and the moon and has no sacred value in and of itself. Jobs with 20 and 30 hour work weeks at equivalent pay rates are also reasonable possibilities. A multi-faceted system including job sharing and part-time professional opportunities would be much more beneficial to society than requiring everyone to either work 40+ hour weeks or work at near minimum wage in part-time employment. The fact that teachers have nine month appointments should not be viewed as a negative characteristic, but, rather, evidence that those individuals have chosen to work in a job where they have the option to develop other aspects of their lives. Since most work 50+ hours during the nine months school is in session and then attend inservice education in the summer, they are really just participating in a flex-plan where the hours are rearranged into 50 hour weeks. West Germany has state mandated six week vacations for all workers, as does Denmark. The average vacation time in Scandinavia is eleven weeks. American workers should be offered and develop more options for work and vacation to improve the lives of workers and the children of this country.

Looking at new and unusual options for reality is not a new pastime for me. Spending my junior year of college in England and actually living in

another society has had a strong influence on my view of the world and so teaching. I became aware that many things could be done entirely differently from the way in which I was accustomed and turn out just as well or even better. I believe in questioning assumptions and considering many options when making decisions. This has affected my teaching, encouraging me to go against the status quo in many curricular decisions. It also has quite obviously affected the way I think about roles in my life and career.

Having my own children had a subtle, yet profound effect on my own teaching as well. I quite suddenly began to see my elementary school students as someone's children (I could imagine being their mother) rather than as individuals in the class. My patience increased appreciably as I thought about the struggle that might have already ensued at home that morning to finish a glass of milk or get all the clothes on right side out and frontwards etc. This new awareness, coupled with the incredible diversity of my own children's abilities, pushed me toward an even more developmental curricular model.

In summary, I was attracted to teaching because of my love for physical activity and my desire to help others feel comfortable and competent in movement. I considered physical therapy and social work as two other career options. I did not consider other careers in science. I think now that I might have enjoyed studying natural sciences in preparation for a career related to ecology. At this point in my life, however, I am not interested in starting a new career since I want to spend more time with my family, not less.

My career has influenced my life in terms of stress produced, time and energy needed for planning, pride in accomplishment, and opportunities for personal exercise. Finally, my life has influenced my career through my developing awareness of the need for flexible workloads and time constraints placed on family and work in an attempt to lead a meaningful and well-rounded life. I shall try to remain aware of the fact that these are my concerns, not necessarily those of my participants as I conduct interviews and attempt to make sense out of the data in this study.

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